Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
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FBIS-NES-96-061 *28 March 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Hijacked Plane Lands in Libya

NC2703173096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1715 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—The hijacked Egyptian airliner landed at Tubruq Airport, Libya, at 1805 Cairo time this evening. This was announced by the tower at Cairo International airport.

MENA has learned that the crew of the hijacked plane includes seven members: pilot Captain Amenhotob Nassar, copilot Khalid Samir, and five flight attendants Hadir Salah-al-Din, Maysa Mahmud, Daliya Malak, Dina 'Adil 'Ali, and Hind Faruq.

Inter-Arab Affairs: 54 Americans Reported on Hijacked Plane

NC2703204096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2031 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—MENA has learned that the list of 145 passengers on the hijacked plane includes 54 Americans, 30 Southeast Asians, three people from the Netherlands, and three Saudis, who are the hijackers and belong to the Qahtan family, the Bani Hilal tribe. The list also includes 16 Egyptians. The rest are other nationalities.

The security departments at Cairo Airport are ready to facilitate the entry of the passengers, who are expected to arrive in Cairo tonight.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Libyan Security Forces Surround Plane, Begin Negotiations

NC2703172796 Paris AFP in English
1714 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Mar 27 (AFP) — An armed hijacker seized an Egyptian airliner with 153 passengers and crew on board during a flight from Luxor to Cairo on Wednesday [27 March] and forced it to land in Libya, aviation officials said.

Libyan security forces surrounded the EgyptAir Airbus A-310 in Tubruq airport on the northeast coast of Libya and began negotiations, Libyan sources said.

Egypt's civil aviation authority said the plane was taken by a lone hijacker who spoke in Arabic, but that his nationality or demands were not known.

"He asked to meet Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi and said he would not harm the passengers who are all safe and sound," an aviation official said.

The plane's 145 passengers included 59 Canadians, 35 French, 17 Japanese, 16 Egyptians, and 18 people of other nationalities. There were also eight crew, including five women flight attendants. Nine of the French were tourists with Club Mediterranean.

The plane was seized five minutes after it took off at 15:55 p.m. (1355 GMT) from the southern Egyptian town of Luxor to fly to the Egyptian capital Cairo.

The plane landed in Tubruq, 200 kilometres (120 miles) from the Egyptian border, at 18:20 p.m. (1620 GMT), the official said.

Libya has been under a UN flight embargo since 1992 because of its refusal to hand over to the United States or Britain two suspects in the 1988 Lockerbie bombing.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Hijackers Demand To Hold Negotiations With al-Qadhdhafi

NC2703182896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1810 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Sources at the Cairo airport control tower said that the hijackers, probably two people, speak Arabic. And when Tubruq airport tried to talk with them in English they demanded that the conversation be held in Arabic.

The two hijackers told the Tubruq tower that they want to hold direct negotiations with Libyan Revolution Leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Hijackers Want To Address Mubarak, Clinton, al-Qadhdhafi

NC2703183096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1816 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA) — MENA has learned that the hijackers of the Egyptian airliner speak Arabic but not the Egyptian dialect. In a message they sent through the pilot, the hijackers said they wish to present a message from God [Allah] to Colonel Mu'mmar al-Qadhdhafi, President Husni Mubarak, and U.S. President Bill Clinton concerning the lifting of the siege on the Palestinians and finding a solution to the Sudan issue.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Hijackers Motives, Affiliation Reported

NC2703184096 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic
1814 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] The hijackers claimed they belong to the Bani Hilal tribe in the Arabian Peninsula and that they have good intentions and support President Husni Mubarak, who condemns terrorism. They said they have important information about the attack on his excellency in Addis Ababa last year. [passage omitted]

Inter-Arab Affairs: Minister Says Identity of Hijackers Not Confirmed

NC2703213596 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 2110 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif has said that the Libyan authorities have begun investigations to verify the identity of the hijackers of the Egyptian airliner and their motives. The CNN and other media reports on the nationality of the hijackers have not yet been confirmed nor that they are Saudi nationals. Also, it has not been confirmed whether or not the hijackers belong to the Bani Hilal tribe in the Arabian Peninsula as they had originally claimed. Al-Sharif added that the Libyan authorities played a major role in ending the hijacking and succeeded in making the hijackers surrender after several contacts by Libyan officials that ended with the hijackers surrendering to the commander of the Tubruq military zone in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah.

Inter-Arab Affairs: MENA Reports Hijackers Are Egyptians

NC2803001196 Cairo MENA in English 2355 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 27 — (MENA) — MENA has learned that the hijackers of the Egyptian airliner are Egyptians. The three included are Najib Muhmmad Mahmud, owner of Luxor restaurant, his son, 16 year-old and his nephew 14 years old, MENA learned.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Hijackers Identified as Egyptians, Not Saudis

NC2703202496 Paris AFP in English 2013 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Mar 27 (AFP) — Three hijackers who seized an Egyptian airliner and forced it to fly to Libya before surrendering Wednesday [27 March] are Egyptians, security officials at Cairo airport said. Earlier, an Egyptian official said the three were Saudis.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Hijackers Surrender to Tubruq Military Commander

NC2703185196 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 1841 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Just in: A responsible Egyptian source has just told our correspondent that the three hijackers have surrendered to the commander of the military zone of Tubruq in the Libyan Jamahiriyah.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Pilot Tells of Hijacking Saga, Negotiations With Libya

NC2803081596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0730 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Benghazi, 28 Mar (MENA)— Amenhotob Nassar, the pilot of the hijacked plane, said someone carrying a Molotov cocktail and a case of "gunpowder" entered the cockpit five minutes before the plane was due to arrive in Cairo and threatened to explode the Molotov cocktail and gunpowder if the pilot did not obey his orders and head to a Libyan airport.

The pilot added that he told the hijacker there was not enough fuel to get them to Libya. The hijacker then tried to ignite the gunpowder with a lighter but the pilot calmed him down and confirmed that the plane would head for Libya.

In statements to MENA today, the pilot said: The hijacker, who almost ignited the gunpowder, was calmed down when information was received from one of the airports at which the plane could land. He said this was done through contacts and telecommunications between the Egyptian and Libyan authorities. The pilot then said that en route to Benghazi Airport, he spotted an airport 90 km from Tubruq at which the plane could land. He thus landed the plane at Martubah Airport.

The plane's captain revealed that the hijacker said he was not a terrorist, that he wanted President Mubarak to hold his head high, and that he was against Israel's actions and its siege of the Palestinians. The hijacker also said that the resolution of the Sudanese issue [not further specified] was in his hands and that he had a message from "God" to convey personally to Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi. The hijacker called for lifting the siege of the Palestinians and said he wanted to see President Mubarak — who always condemns terrorism — holding his head high, adding: I am not a terrorist; I am from the Muslim tribes of Bani Hilal.

The pilot noted that the hijackers were serious in their threat to ignite gunpowder, which was sprinkled throughout the cockpit.

Captain Amenhotob said: After arriving at Martubah Airport the hijacker said he did not believe he was in Libya. He seemed unbalanced. It was later discovered that he had taken a whole strip of sedative pills and was acting strangely.

The pilot calmed him and his son down and gained their confidence. The pilot confirmed that contact with the Libyan authorities had been made but that Colonel al-Qadhdhafi, whom the hijacker asked to meet, could not come but would send Ahmad Qadhdhaf-al-Dam to negotiate on his behalf.

The pilot said that once they calmed them, the hijackers allowed the crew to give the passengers drinks while they waited for Ahmad Qadhdhaf-al-Dam. On arrival, Qadhdhaf-al-Dam began negotiating with them through the wireless, as the hijackers refused to let him board the plane. The negotiations lasted over half an hour, after which the hijackers surrendered to the Libyan authorities and disembarked from the plane.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Egyptian Envoy Interviewed on Hijacking Situation

NC2803072096 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 28 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Ahmad Wahdan, Egypt's Ambassador to Libya, in Tripoli, by Fayiz al-Miliji in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Miliji] Ambassador, good morning and welcome to the Voice of the Arabs.

[Wahdan] Good morning to you.

[Al-Miliji] The Libyan authorities are currently interrogating the plane hijackers to discover their identity and the motives behind this incident. Is there anything new on this?

[Wahdan] What is new is that interrogations are continuing. I confirm that the passengers are on their way to the airport. God willing, they will return safely to Cairo today. I also confirm that the Libyan authorities have cooperated in releasing the passengers and making the hijackers surrender. This happened thanks to the supervision and personal intervention of brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, who convinced the hijackers of the uselessness of terrorist activities and persuaded them to release the passengers. This was indeed the case. There is coordination and cooperation between the Egyptian and Libyan authorities in following up investigations to find out the hijackers' motives. But I would like to confirm that in their early talks with the investigators, the kidnappers praised President Husni Mubarak's policies and stated that they are opposed to terrorism. Therefore, the investigations will reveal the true motives behind this action. But I can reconfirm that the passengers and crew are safe as is the airliner. God willing, the plane will return after it is searched and prepared for return.

[Al-Miliji] Ambassador, what about the nationality of the hijackers?

[Wahdan] Investigations are continuing, because, under such circumstances, you need to ascertain what passports they are carrying. This requires time and special measures by the security authorities. We are confident that the Libyan authorities can ascertain all the facts in coordination with the Egyptian security authorities. Investigations are continuing to ascertain the nationality of the hijackers.

[Al-Miliji] How about their motives? The initial interrogations revealed that the hijackers sent a message through the pilot to Colonel al-Qadhdhafi in which they said they intended to submit a protest so that the siege of the Palestinian people might be lifted.

[Wahdan] This was carried by the JAMAHIRIYAH ARAB NEWS AGENCY and Libyan television. But investigations are continuing; they have not yet been finalized. Therefore, we need to wait until investigations are finalized.

[Al-Miliji] How were contacts between Cairo and Tripoli during the last moments before the hijackers gave themselves up?

[Wahdan] As soon as we were told the plane was heading to the Jamahiriyah, contacts were held continuously between the Libyan leadership and the Egyptian leadership through the embassy here. Coordination was complete and the situation was followed up. We were in contact with the Egyptian and Libyan leaderships. There was clear coordination between the two sides until the hijackers gave themselves up. I can reconfirm the efforts of brother leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi in clearing up this situation.

[Al-Miliji] What were you told in your last contact with the Egyptian leadership in Cairo?

[Wahdan] We were informed, praise be to God, that the plane President Husni Mubarak ordered to come to Libya had taken off for the Jamahiriyah to pick up the passengers and return them safely to Egypt.

[Al-Miliji] Were there any specific instructions?

[Wahdan] What we would like you to do is to assure all the families that the passengers are well and the crew are fine. God willing, they will return home safely. Investigations continue and there is full cooperation between the Libyan and Egyptian authorities.

[Al-Miliji] At the end of this dialogue, we thank you, our listeners, and Ambassador Ahmad Wahdan, Egypt's ambassador in the Libyan Jamahiriyah, who was with us on the open phone line between Cairo and Tripoli, the capital of the fraternal Libyan Jamahiriyah.

[Wahdan] Thank you.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Envoy to Libya Says Passengers Are Well

NC2803022496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0141 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 28 Mar (MENA) — Ahmad Wahdan, the Egyptian ambassador to Libya, said that all passengers of the Egyptian airliner, whose hijackers surrendered, are well and are being taken care of. In a statement to Cairo Radio this evening, he said that Libyan revolution leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi himself supervised and interceded in the release of all passengers and the hijackers' surrender to the Libyan authorities. He noted that Colonel al-Qadhdhafi ordered that utmost care be given to the passengers and crew members of the airliner in a five-star hotel until the airliner that President Mubarak ordered to be flown to Libya arrives to transport the passengers from the Libyan Jamahiriyah to Egypt.

In response to a question on the hijackers, Wahdan said that they are under the supervision of the Libyan authorities who are carrying out an investigation on them in coordination with the Egyptian authorities.

In reply to a question on the number of hijackers and their motives, Wahdan said so far there are three and that the investigation will reveal other details. He noted that there are no motives against Egypt since all of the hijackers's statements asserted their praise of President Mubarak and his efforts to fight terrorism.

Responding to a question on the measures that have been taken, Wahdan said that there are agreed-upon measures in such cases, noting that a team was formed to deal with contacts in these cases, this time with the Libyan authorities. He said that all members of the Egyptian embassy and of the consulate general in Banghazi were in contact with the airport and the Libyan and Egyptian authorities to follow up on the matter. He praised cooperation with the Libyan leadership led by brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi. He said that good cooperation with the Libyan leadership had the greatest effect in ending this crisis peacefully. On the time of the airliner's take-off from Libya and arrival in Cairo, he said: We are awaiting the take-off of the airliner from Egypt, and we assure the relatives of the passengers that they are well and being taken care of.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Al-Qadhdhafi Visits Freed Passengers of Hijacked Plane

LD2803133696 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 1230 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] As a noble humane gesture showing a high level of civilization, which singles him out as a symbol of love and peace among people, the brother leader of the revolution paid a visit this morning to the passengers and crew of the hijacked Egyptian plane which landed at Tubruq airport yesterday evening. He visited them at the Tibesti hotel, in Benghazi, where they are staying before leaving the Great Jamahiriyah. [passage omitted]

Inter-Arab Affairs: Egyptian Foreign Minister Arrives in Benghazi

LD2803131196 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1232 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Benghazi, 28 Mar — Brother 'Amr Musa, the Egyptian foreign minister, arrived at Baninah airport near Benghazi aboard an Egyptair aircraft on a visit the great Jamahiriyah. He was greeted upon arrival by the brother secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Mubarak Orders Airliner To Bring Passengers From Libya

NC2703193496 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 1907 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak has ordered that an Egyptair airliner fly to Tubruq airport in the Libyan Jamahiriyah to bring the passengers of the hijacked Egyptian airliner to Cairo. The Libyan authorities are fuelling the airliner in preparation for its return flight.

The three hijackers surrendered after several contacts with the Libyan officials and turned themselves in to the commander of the Tubruq military zone in Libya. All passengers of the airliner—foreigners and Eygptians—are well. They have disembarked from the airliner and the Libyan authorities have received them and taken care of their needs. The Libyan authorities have begun an investigation to verify the identity of the hijackers.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Al-Sharif Explains Delay in Passengers' Return

NC2803140596 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1315 GMT 28 Mar 96

[Remarks by Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif in response to questions by unidentified radio correspondents on 28 March; place not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Any news on the hijacked plane?

[Al-Sharif] I have nothing to add to what has already been stated. As I said yesterday, the Libyan authorities are investigating the case. The identities of the hijackers

will of course be publicized. But as of this moment I have nothing new. I affirmed yesterday that the U.S. network CNN's claim that the kidnappers are Saudi nationals has not been proven.

The message the kidnappers conveyed to the pilot and, accordingly, to the control tower, that they belong to the Bani-Hilal clan in Saudi Arabia, has not been proven either.

[Correspondent] Has Egypt requested the handover of the hijackers?

[Al-Sharif] This is natural according to agreements between Egypt and Libya. You know we signed 11 agreements that provide for cooperation in the various fields.

[Correspondent] What about the delay in the plane's return? Is there a reason for that?

[Al-Sharif] The delay is over fuel. Martubah Airport has no facilities for night landing. The Egyptian flight we sent headed for Benghazi. The passengers are being transported by buses from Martubah and Benghazi. The passengers were offered the chance of resting after the hardship of the trip. There are no problems concerning their return. The Libyan authorities provided them with every comfort. It played a role worthy of appreciation.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Hijackers Reportedly To Be Returned to Egypt

NC2803064596 Cairo MENA in English 0630 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Benghazi, March 28 (MENA)—Egypt's Consul General here Ambassador Mamduh Shu'ayr said that the hijackers of Egyptair Airbus plane to Libya yesterday will be returned to Egypt.

In statements to MENA, Shu'ayr said that the Libyan authorities offered every facility and help to the hijacked aircraft as soon as news of the hijacking was reported.

After their release, the passengers of the Airbus said they did not realize that the plane had been hijacked until only half an hour before landing at Martubah Airport in Libya, as the crew exerted their utmost to hide the crisis from them, the consul said.

The hijackers did not have specific demands and the Egyptian embassy in Tripoli was on constant and direct contact with the Egyptian authorities as well as the Libyan ones, he said.

The Airbus landed at Martubah Airport as it did not have enough fuel to enable it to reach Benghazi Airport, he added.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Hijacked Passengers Depart Benghazi for Cairo

NC2803144696 Paris AFP in English 1440 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 28 (AFP) — An Egyptian plane carrying 145 passengers from an airliner hijacked to Libya set off Thursday [28 March] from the northeastern city of Benghazi to fly them back to Cairo, Egypt's national carrier said.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Al-Qadhdhafi—Plane To Return to Cairo After Checkup

NC2803122496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1205 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Benghazi, 28 Mar (MENA)—Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan revolution, today met the passengers of the plane that was hijacked yesterday. Col. al-Qadhdhafi congratulated the passengers and foreign tourists [as received] on their safety. He greeted the Egyptian passengers, telling them: Welcome to your country.

Col. al-Qadhdhafi shook hands with the passengers and members of the Egyptian press team that arrived here this morning aboard the plane sent by President Mubarak to pick up the passengers.

Speaking to the Egyptian journalists, Col. al-Qadhdhafi said there are no problems concerning the passengers of the Egyptian plane hijacked yesterday, adding that the plane will return to Cairo after a checkup. He added that the Egyptian and Libyan authorities had coordinated fully on the handling of the incident; the contacts were on the highest level.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 19 Mar

NC2703203496

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 19 March edition of the Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Intellectuals View Changing Western Attitudes to Islam

INTELLECTUALS VIEW CHANGING WESTERN ATTITUDES TO ISLAM

On page 20, in the newspaper's "Muslims Worldwide" section, there is a 2,200-word report by Muhammad

al-Abnudi offering the views of several Islamic intellectuals and academics on changing Western attitudes to Islam. Against the backdrop of Sharm al-Shaykh's Summit of Peacemakers, which declared that "Islam is innocent of all forms of terrorism" and asserted that "it is a big mistake to make a connection between Islam and violence," 'Aqidati addresses the following questions to the academics:

"What does this testimony by the major world leaders signify in terms of illustrating Islam's tolerance, particularly at this time? What is our duty in improving the image of Islam at home and abroad following this international consensus? How can this testimony be translated into definite political stances on Islam and Muslim causes?"

'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Misiri, Islamist thinker and professor of English literature at 'Ayn Shams University, believes "the Western testimony of Islam's tolerance means nothing."

He adds that whenever the Western media praise or damn something, they do so only in line "with the West's strategic interests." He says the West exploits "any passing incident to stick the label of terrorism on Muslims" but disregards "the demolition of entire Palestinian villages and that UN Security Council resolutions passed against Israel are not implemented."

Accusing the West of constant hostility to national, religious, and regional blocs, he says: "We must realize that the Western empire strikes against these blocs with an iron fist. It has destroyed nationalism and is on its way to destroying Islam everywhere. But Islam refuses to die; it has become the sole persistent enemy of the Western empire."

Dr. Muhammad al-Shahhat al-Jundi, professor of Islamic shari'ah and assistant dean of Tanta University's School of Law, remarks that "the West's testimony that Islam opposes extremism and terrorism came at the right time, particularly as Islam and the Muslims have recently been the target of numerous attacks from all sides."

Dr. Mahmud al-Musaylihi, professor of international law at al-Azhar University's College of Shari'ah and Law, says: "The declarations by the delegates at the international Summit of Peacemakers show that they now have a clear picture of the facts and recognize that Islam does not know terrorism. There is a division between Islam as a religion and the actions of some Muslims. This must be clearly distinguished."

Al-Musaylihi adds that Muslim governments should send envoys who speak foreign languages to various Western countries and should publish books in Western languages to disseminate a sound image of Islam and portray Islam's tolerant qualities.

Dr. Hamdi Hasan, head of the information department at al-Azhar University's College of Arabic Language, says the Western media must understand that it is wrong to link Islam to terrorism and notes that "terrorism is found in various regions where there are no Muslims at all."

He continues: "Efforts are under way in the West to improve the image of Islam. For example, there are Islamic centers there and some universities offer special courses on Islam. These efforts need to be boosted."

A related 300-word article by 'Adil Dayf on the same page makes the following recommendations to help improve the image of Islam:

"First, Muslims must refrain from any actions that harm their image.

"Second, they should renounce all forms of terrorism.

"Third, no Muslim should participate in any criminal action.

"Fourth, Muslims should preach Islam by good example and friendly advice.

"Fifth, they should cooperate with everyone to create a world free from violence and terrorism."

Note: This issue of 'AQIDATI is mostly taken up by articles, reports, and commentaries paying tribute to the recently deceased grand imam of al-Azhar, Shaykh Jad al-Haqq, and Islamic call advocate Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: PA's al-Husayni Warns of 'Explosion'

NC2703151496 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 27 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of Jerusalem affairs in the PA, in Jerusalem, by Fawzi al-Jundi in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Jundi] Do you feel the Palestinian people are being starved under the siege currently imposed by Israel?

[Al-Husayni] There is far more to it than that. The Palestinians are on the verge of exploding. All the circumstances, the Israeli practices, and the climate in which the Palestinian people are forced to live will ultimately lead to an explosion no one can stop.

[Al-Jundi] Do you think Israel can ease these measures for the sake of continuing with the peace process?

[Al-Husayni] Indeed, the peace process can continue only if two conditions are met: ending these measures and changing the Israeli mentality. As long as the Israelis continue to treat us as an occupied people, or second- or third-rate human beings so that they can do whatever they want with us... [pauses] unless this mentality changes and unless Israel begins to implement the agreement it signed, there will be an explosion that will destroy everything.

[Al-Jundi] But Israel makes the lifting of the security cordon around the PA [Palestinian Authority] areas contingent on the PA's efforts in fighting terrorism.

[Al-Husayni] The PA is doing what it's doing to protect and defend Palestinian security, not to serve any other party. The moment Israel thinks — or if it continues to think — we are doing what we're doing because Israel had demanded it, the situation will deteriorate. That is one thing. On the other hand, Israel cannot ask us to do more than it could ask of itself. There are far more dangerous elements inside Israel and under its control than those they are asking us to apprehend. The Israelis themselves are unable to catch them. We have had successes unprecedented for Palestinian security and thus for the security of the entire region, including Israel's. I repeat that this is our own decision, which serves our own needs.

But if Israel tries to treat us like their agents or minions, they will never succeed. That will not happen. As I said before, the result will be destructive.

[Al-Jundi] You mentioned the accomplishments of the Palestinian leadership. Are these accomplishments reflected by filling the prisons, or are there other accomplishments?

[Al-Husayni] Of course not. Filling prisons with detainees is not an accomplishment. The prisons are not full of detainees. The PA's accomplishment lies in successfully developing a political line and getting public backing for that line. The enemies of this process are trying to shatter our people's unity. With its present measures, Israel is turning back the clock and causing Palestinian sentiment to revert to what it was during the Israeli occupation. This could ruin the entire peace process.

I absolutely do not believe that one can combat violence by detaining people. People respond when arrests, if any, and storming operations are conducted properly, without harming others. Anything else will be counterproductive.

We are talking about the PA's success in changing Palestinian public opinion and steering it toward rejecting violence. But the persistence of the Israeli measures and Israel's refusal to change its attitude — treating us as if our only job were to oppress our people — will mess things up. When this happens, everything will collapse, but the ceiling will not fall in on our heads alone; it will fall in on Israeli heads as well.

[Al-Jundi] It is clear that Shim'on Peres continues to insist on keeping a security cordon around the PA areas. Do you think he has to oblige the hardline right, or did Sharm al-Shaykh spare him that?

[Al-Husayni] Before I answer, I would like to say that we are not eager to go back to standing in line to find a job in Israel. We are not eager to cross the broders to get to Israel. However, they must open our borders with the world and allow us to travel freely to Egypt, Jordan, and the whole world. Once this happens, we will not need their factories, farms, or assistance.

Let them close their borders to us. No Palestinian is eager to go back to the past. It was a stage we tried to get through, in order to build our economy and thereby eliminate those links. Let them shut the doors to us, and close the borders to us. But our borders with the rest of the world must be opened. Only then can we build our state and our economy.

But they do not want that. They want to keep us in a cage so that our economy collapses and we become more dependent on them.

[Al-Jundi] This brings us back to the issue of control at the crossing points and the need to give the Palestinian people control of certain crossing points that open to the outside world.

[Al-Husayni] Yes. Let them close the borders, put up mesh or barbed wire fences, or even build walls between us and them. This will not affect us, and it does not bother us. We do not want that link [with Israel]. I am one of those who long worked to change this situation and develop a kind of coexistence with the Israelis. All that time, some Israelis perpetrated massacres and committed ugly crimes against us. However, we said peace was more important than anything else. But they see us all — both those who urge war and those who urge peace, those who make an effort and those who don't — as being the same. To them, we are all the same. Unless this mentality changes, it is better for them to break that link and shut themselves off on their little island to live as they please. That is their own business.

However, as far as we are concerned, if they do not open our borders to the world, the whole structure will

collapse. If this happens, the ceiling will fall in not on our heads alone, but on theirs as well.

[Al-Jundi] Does the Palestinian side still fear the coming to power of Likud leader Netanyahu?

[Al-Husayni] Considering what Peres has said and done, we don't think Netanyahu can be any worse.

[Al-Jundi] What do you mean?

[Al-Husayni] What Peres is doing now is neither coexistence nor peace. Thus, I do not know what difference is there between him and Netanyahu.

[Al-Jundi] Thank you.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Sources' Term Israeli Measures 'Serious Development'

JN2803102796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Official Palestinian security sources today rejected Israeli occupation measures which resulted in the arrests of 350 citizens from Bi'r Zayt town and the villages of Abu Qashsh and Abu Shukhaydim from the Ramallah Governorate. Most of the arrested citizens are from the Gaza Strip governorate who study in Bi'r Zayt University. The sources described Israel's occupational measures as a serious development because it prevents the geographic connection between the governorates of the West Bank and Gaza and serves those who have vested interests in partitioning the Palestinian people. More in the following report from Rashid Hilal:

[Hilal] The Israeli occupation authorities lifted the military closure on the town of Bi'r Zayt and the villages of Abu Qashsh and Abu Shukhaydim at dawn today. At 1100 today, the occupation solders lifted military barricades on the main roads leading to Abu Qashsh and Bi'r Zayt after clashes between the students and the occupation forces. During their arrest campaigns, the occupation forces arrested more than 350 citizens and students from Bi'r Zayt University, using 1,000 soldiers armed with weapons and using military vehicles.

All the students from the Gaza Governorates in Bi'r Zayt were arrested. Four students escaped through the mountains and arrived in Ramallah. They said that the occupation forces besieged all entrances to Bi'r Zayt, Abu Qashsh, and Abu Shukhaydim and that the occupation soldiers began an unprecedented house-to-house inspection campaign. The students said that the occupation forces used helicopters and flares.

Staff Colonel Yunis al-'Ass, commander of the national security force in the Ramallah and al-Birah Governorate, deplored the storming campaigns, which the occupation forces launched at dawn today, and said that such practices are unjustified.

Palestinian Affairs: Labor Minister on Economic Impact of Blockade

MM2703164896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 27 Mar 96 p 10

[Interview with Palestinian Labor Minister Samir Ghawshah by Jihan Faruq al-Husayni in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Husayni] What are the most important consequences of the blockade and the closure policy imposed by Israel on the Palestinian territories?

[Ghawshah] They reach beyond the Palestinian economy to the social and political situation. Apart from the closure, there is also the fact that Palestinians are prevented from working inside Israel, the ban on the import and export of agricultural produce, food products, and medicine, and transport paralysis. All these measures are violations of human rights and Palestinian-Israeli agreements.

[Al-Husayni] What is the most pressing problem that the Palestinian Authority [PA] faces as a result of the closure policy?

[Ghawshah] The unemployment problem. The occupation has resulted in unemployment of 35-50 percent. The closure policy raises this ratio to about 78 percent. This causes social problems, since there is an increase of tension between family members and the emergence of incidents of social violence, making it the right terrain for recruiting elements which would participate in military operations against the peace. This is in addition to the PA's embarrassment before its people because of the closure.

[Al-Husayni] Is there no plan to solve the unemployment problem within a Palestinian framework and minimize reliance on Israel?

[Ghawshah] We live in exceptional circumstances and face a daunting legacy left over by the occupation and made more complex by the current Israeli policy. We have a plan for providing work for the Palestinian work force. However, quick results can hardly be expected, as it is not a magic solution. Our plan is based on reviving the Palestinian economy and gradually severing its links with the Israeli economy. But how can we talk about economic development and creating job opportunities in the light of a blockade and closure?

Of course, every time the Palestinian economy takes a step forward, it relies less on Israel. Eighty percent of our trade is still with Israel, and the only solution to this problem is to develop economic and trade relations with

our Arab neighbors. Israel sees the Palestinian areas as a market for its products and takes advantage of cheap Palestinian labor. Consequently, it will try to maintain the economic hegemony and prevent the progress of the Palestinian economy.

[Al-Husayni] How is the unemployment problem being tackled under these circumstances?

[Ghawshah] At the Labor Ministry we have plans that give priority to the employment issues and to using and creating job opportunities, in conjunction with the ministries of economy, industry, finance, and international cooperation, in addition to representatives from business and with the help of all institutions and organizations, including the Arab and International Labor Organizations. Also, we are trying to get the donor states to act quickly on their promises and commitments. Some projects are currently being examined, but fall below the required level. We need direct, short-term projects which would give quick results. We have mostly medium or long-term projects.

In short, we need substantial investments to solve the unemployment problem. However, the Israeli measures are the main obstacle to investment. When the foreign investor comes to study the market and shows his readiness, he is confronted by a heap of Israeli security measures, which make him hesitate. Whichever way we look at it, the Israeli position is the obstacle.

[Al-Husayni] Which are the sectors affected by the blockade?

[Ghawshah] Agriculture is the worst hit. The Agriculture Ministry lost some $2 million in the first two days of the closure. Our loss in the flower trade alone was about $1 million. We also lost more that 1,500 tonnes of vegetables which were piled up at the Qarni checkpoint and were spoiled because they could not be transported.

In the transport and communications sector, there was total paralysis, and the losses are in the region of $600,000 per day.

[Al-Husayni] Did the donor states abide by their promises in the light of this blockade?

[Ghawshah] Several states have announced that they are ready to help. However, we have not seen anything concrete. The assistance stopped at the beginning of the blockade. Japan announced that it would give $10 million in urgent aid, but we have not received anything yet. It is very likely that this amount will take the form of long-term projects which would not give quick results.

The donor states have promised to set up projects, and at the last Paris meeting pledged $865 million, in addition to the $500 million decided in 1995. But so far nothing has happened.

[Al-Husayni] How do you assess the partial lifting of the blockade after the Sharm al-Shaykh summit?

[Ghawshah] So far, the only outcome is to lift the separation between the Palestinian cities and villages. The blockade is still in force, with only some food products allowed into Gaza and some agricultural produce allowed to leave. Also, more than 1,000 Palestinian workers were allowed to return to work in the Erez industrial zone, which has not been handed over to us despite being situated in the Palestinian territories. With regard to lifting the blockade, there have been only very small steps with limited impact.

[Al-Husayni] Do you believe that the blockade policy is linked to the Israeli elections?

[Ghawshah] Of course the elections play a part. Prior to the Jerusalem and Ashqelon incidents, the Labor Party had hardened its stance in an attempt to win the Israeli extremists' votes. There was more emphasis on Jerusalem being Israel's eternal capital. There was the announcement that thousands of housing units would be built on Palestinian territories in Jerusalem. This is also linked to arbitrary conditions for implementing the redeployment in Hebron.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Secret' Hamas Document Explains 'Camouflage' Tactics

MM2703130896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 27 Mar 96 p 7

[Report by Husayn Hijazi: "Palestinian Preventive Security Chief Says: Hamas' Secret Organ Receives Orders From Movement's Leadership in Jordan"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza — Muhammad Dahlan, chief of Palestinian Preventive Security, has said that the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) "secret organ," which was revealed during the interrogations of Islamists held in Gaza, is controlled by Hamas' leadership in Jordan. He pointed out that members of this organ "are more dangerous than those being pursued [al-mutaradin], because most of them are unknown and some of them are entitled to enter Israel."

Meanwhile, a Palestinian official revealed to AL-HAYAH yesterday a secret internal Hamas document. It indicates that Hamas is working to allocate roles in a manner that sometimes requires revealing a kind of dispute in statements for the purpose of camouflage. [passage omitted]

A Palestinian official in Gaza has allowed AL-HAYAH to read parts of an internal Hamas bulletin which the

Palestinian Authority found during raids on the movement's offices and its leaders' homes. It consists of messages from the movement's leaders abroad to Hamas' leadership inside [the self-rule areas]. The bulletin says: "This (secret) organ is an independent organ and has no link with the movement's other organs except through channels abroad. That is, the movement's leadership abroad is the only body entitled to issue orders and instructions, and no internal leadership [is so entitled], not even the Administrative Bureau or the Shura Council, which is the movement's political wing."

The bulletin adds: "All the wings inside must serve the movement's general strategy. The allocation of roles may sometimes require the announcement of some kind of ostensible or even fundamental dispute." It outlines this tactic in the following manner: "When the Shura Council or the Administrative Bureau decides to negotiate with the Authority or to abolish military action, it does not mean that this decision is a real one. It could be prompted by deceptive circumstances [zuruf khida'iyah] for the purpose of camouflage. We could also distribute an internal bulletin urging a halt to armed action, because we know that the content of such a bulletin would reach the Authority so that they would be convinced of the credibility of our orientation. At the same time we would continue to operate in the other direction which we represent, that is, we could carry out a military action and then tell the bureau (the political wing) to denounce it publicly in order to spare the movement a strike from the Authority. All this is part of our general strategy."

The bulletin goes on to say: "We want to be a strong rival to our enemies, we have to master the rules of the game and allocate the roles well: This one negotiates with the Authority, that one forms a political party, a third opposes all that, a fourth takes up arms to fight, a fifth denounces military action, and so on. Some time ago we assigned some brothers to pursue a public policy opposed to the movement's political line in order to strengthen the Islamic negotiators' position and enable them to make the largest possible gains during their negotiations with the Authority in order to satisfy these oppositionist voices. Do not be surprised if we order you to carry out a certain military action and then later issue a statement denouncing this action, because all that is done in the framework of a policy of deception, camouflage, and allocation of roles."

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Member Confesses To Receiving Orders From Amman

JN2703205996 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1825 GMT 27 Mar 96

["Confession" by Hamas member Dr. Husayn Musaytif Hasan 'Ashur with unidentified off-camera interviewer; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Interviewer] What is your name? What is your job? Which faction do you belong to?

['Ashur] In the name of God, most gracious, most merciful. My name is Dr. Husayn Musaytif Hasan 'Ashur. I am an ear, nose, and throat doctor. I am a 1992 graduate of 'Ayn Shams University. I used to belong to the Muslim Brotherhood. I recently became a member of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. I was assigned the task of coordinating military action between Amman and the Gaza Strip.

[Interviewer] What is your position within the hierarchy of the Muslim Brotherhood abroad?

['Ashur] I was the leader of a Muslim Brotherhood ring abroad.

[Interviewer] What was the assignment you were given from abroad?

['Ashur] In 1992, Amman told me to connect the clandestine group of the martyr 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam battalions with the group outside and to disconnect the clandestine group from the fugitives.

[Interviewer] Amman ordered you to carry out military action in the areas under the [Palestinian] Authority's jurisdiction and to use these areas as a springboard for attacks elsewhere. But you rejected this. Where do you stand now? And what about your position within the faction's hierarchy?

['Ashur] As a matter of fact, my status as a connection was suspended in October 1994. But recently, my Amman-based leadership asked me to leave the territories for a meeting. I did so. We held lengthy discussions. I explained to them that it would be better to do away with military action for many reasons, chief among which is the impossibility of coexistence between two military powers in the same area. I also told them that people can no longer tolerate harassment, which aggravates their living conditions. We discussed many other things. They eventually dismissed me, indicating my services were no longer needed.

[Interviewer] Does Islam sanction shedding the blood of innocent people, such as policemen, guards, and others?

['Ashur] It goes without saying that Islam does not sanction shedding the blood of a Muslim or non-Muslim without a fair trial. Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace be upon him, says: Shedding a Muslim's blood cannot be sanctioned except in three cases: if he is an adulterer, if he kills someone, or if he repudiates Islam and the Muslim community. Consequently, bloodshed is prohibited under all circumstances.

[Interviewer] Is there any advice you would like to offer the Hamas leadership and Hamas cadres?

['Ashur] I would like to offer some advice to our brothers inside and outside the territories and to the Palestinian Authority. With regard to our brothers outside the Palestinian territories, I advise them not to count on the reports that reach them. Those in Gaza and within the Palestinian National Authority know more about what is going on there. Let the Hamas leaders inside the territories have the final say in this regard. A proverb says that Meccans are the best authority on Mecca's mountain passes.

I advise our brothers within the Hamas political leadership to shoulder their responsibilities. They must demonstrate fearlessness and a high sense of responsibility. We do not need conflict between the community's political currents. I tell them in all frankness that military action inside or outside the areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority must end. The agreements the Palestinian National Authority signed with our neighbors must be complied with.

In addition, I ask the Palestinian National Authority to demonstrate patience, tolerance, and forgiveness. I entreat it to hold a dialogue with Hamas brothers inside the territories to resolve these problems in the interest of this homeland and its people.

[Interviewer] What do you think about the killing of Palestinian policemen, such as Akhram Ahmad, the bodyguard of Qusayy al-'Abadilah? Was this policeman guilty of any wrongdoing? Do you think Islam opposes injustice?

['Ashur] Esteemed brother, my stand is summed up by the saying of Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace be upon him. The prophet says: The shedding of a believer's blood is forbidden unless he kills a person unjustifiably. I am opposed to the killing of any person, Muslim or non-Muslim, a Hamas or not, a policeman or otherwise. When there are no legal or religious grounds for murder, murder should be shunned.

Algeria

Algeria: Cabinet Discusses Supplementary Budget, Austerity Measures

LD2703235396 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia today chaired a Council of Government meeting. Before discussing the items included in the agenda, the prime minister recalled the enriching debate that had taken place at the Transitional National Council [TNC] on the government's program. He asked cabinet ministers to take into account the valuable remarks made and the effective, practical and useful proposals put forward by the members of TNC.

The Council of Government then discussed and endorsed the draft supplementary finance law for 1996 before it is presented to the Council of Ministers. [passage omitted]

Some of the measures proposed by the draft law include increased funding for the National Solidarity Fund to enable it to achieve its objectives toward all the victims of the national tragedy. The measures also include the setting up and funding of a national fund for the promotion of youth employment and the amendment of the provisions governing the National Solidarity Fund. Special tax measures will have to be taken; some of these, which will be in force for a limited period only, will be introduced to pay the salaries which have been overdue this year. Other measures will be taken to stabilize the finances of the enterprises in question.

Moreover, in addition to the provisions included in the draft supplementary finance law, the government will take tangible action to reduce the operating budget. Such cuts, which will not question the means needed to implement the objectives of every ministerial department, will be mainly based on the promotion of an austerity policy at the level of state departments in line with the austerity program which will have to be introduced throughout the country. [passage omitted]

The Council of Government examined and endorsed a draft decree amending and completing Law 22/89 dated 12 December 1989 concerning the prerogatives of the Supreme Court, its structure, and the way it operates. The amendment, which was submitted by the justice minister, will be presented before the next Council of Ministers. [passage omitted]

The amendment of the law concerning the Supreme Court aims at adapting its structure, the way it operates, and its prerogatives to adapt it to the constitutional functions vested upon it. In this respect, the draft law aims at giving the Supreme Court financial autonomy and autonomy in managing its own affairs to enable it to achieve greater efficiency and equip it with an administration capable of carrying out the tasks bestowed upon it.

At the end of the debate, the prime minister said reinforcing this institution was part of efforts aimed at reinforcing the state and its institutions and enabling the judicial body to make significant progress in the protection of society against all kinds of scourges and tackle the issues put before it with tolerance and neutrality.

The Council of Government also listened to a report on Algeria's strategy of international cooperation which was presented by the secretary of state for cooperation and Maghreban affairs. In order to face the major contemporary challenges and achieve the main objectives in order to strengthen them, Algeria will have to work relentlessly toward reducing the foreign financial constraints and providing the necessary conditions that will enable it to adjust to the international changes and integrate the new world economic order. Efforts to reinforce Algeria's stand and role will also have to be based on its effective presence in the international and regional scenes. In this respect, Algeria will endeavor in particular to develop partnership and cooperation in the African, Arab, and Euro-Mediterranean areas. [passage omitted]

The prime minister also decided that 15 diplomatic posts be backed up, this year, by economic and commercial advisers. These advisers will be appointed on the strength of their competence and real ability to carry out such tasks. Mr. Ahmed Ouyahia also stressed the need to make use of our diplomatic representations in order to provide adequate conditions for Algeria's economic activities abroad, particularly with regard to the promotion of exports, the search for partnerships and strengthening them and attracting foreign investments. [passage omitted]

Algeria: Agreement Signed With U.S. on Debt Rescheduling

LD2703204396 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Algeria today signed an agreement with the United States on rescheduling its public debts, estimated at around $1 billion. The agreement was signed by Abdelouahab Keramane, the governor of the Algerian Central Bank, and U.S. Ambassador in Algiers Ronald Neuman.

This agreement falls within the framework of the accord on rescheduling public debts signed in July 1995 with

the Paris Club. The Algerian-U.S. bilateral negotiations were held in excellent conditions, which were as good and even better at times than those which prevailed during the agreements signed last year.

It is worth noting that bilateral agreements are the implementation of an overall accord on debt rescheduling, and deal with fixing interest rates for the amounts which have been rescheduled. The bilateral agreements also deal with the legal aspects, such as the settlement of disputes.

Algeria: FIS Abroad Condemns Abduction of French Clergymen

LD2703165196 Paris LCI Television in French 1600 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] abroad has condemned the abduction [of seven French clergymen in Media province on 27 March] and called for their immediate release.

Egypt

Egypt: Musa on Following Up Israeli Nuclear Reactor Leak, Contacts

NC2703170996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1620 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa stated today that Egypt is following up the issue of the nuclear leakage from Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor in a bid to learn about developments so that it might make the necessary decisions in light of any reports on the issue. He said: We are following up the issue closely on the scientific level and are holding diplomatic contacts.

Egypt: Dailies Criticize Israeli Policy, U.S.-Israeli Pact

NC2803025896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0105 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA) — The Cairo newspapers on Thursday [28 March] again warn that the policy of collective punishment that the Israeli Government is pursuing against the Palestinian people will push them to the edge of starvation. This situation will provoke their wrath and drive them to behavior that will not serve the peace process or Israeli security. In an editorial under the headline "The Collective Punishment, Peace, and Violence," AL-AHRAM says that despite the enormous efforts that the Palestinian Authority is exerting to control the situation in the areas under its rule, the Israeli Government continues its policy to strangulate these areas and drive the Palestinian people to [words indistinct]

In his daily column in AL-AKHBAR, Mustafa Amin emphasizes that it is impossible to destroy the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement unless Israeli terrorism stops first. He says that the Hamas supporters will not stop acts of terrorism unless Israel stops assassination of Muslims, demolition of their homes, and collective punishment. He stresses that every bullet that Israeli terrorism fires will be countered by several bullets.

He says: We call for peace but not peace for one party but for two, a peace that will not allow only Muslims to die and Jews to live. He emphasizes that it is unreasonable to consider an Israeli who kills a Muslim to be a struggler who deserves to be honored and admired whereas the one who assassinates an Israeli be considered a sinful criminal who deserves execution. He says that justice is indivisible, and bullets have no nationality. He says that this is what makes us reject the position of those who call for rewarding Israel every time it kills an Arab and call for punishing an Arab if he returns fire at an Israeli and counters Israeli terrorism with terrorism. He points out that jihad is a duty of every believer and is not a privilege of one party. Jihad is not a crime committed by Muslims and, at the same time, a sacred duty of the Israelis.

Amin stresses that Arabs are against treating an Israeli killer as a hero of the homeland and treating an Arab struggler as a criminal deserving execution. He notes that the vast majority of Arabs wants and welcomes peace and, at the same time, rejects capitulation. He says: We welcome the day when massacres and bloodbaths stop and want this to be observed by both sides and not to ask Hamas alone not to fire and let the Zionist extremists open fire, threaten people, and wreak havoc.

Under the headline "A Maneuver To Contain the Unacceptable Anger," AL-AKHBAR chief editor Jalal Duwaydar says: I hope the U.S. State Department statement on the meeting of the follow-up committee of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit is not merely a maneuver to contain the anger prevailing in the Egyptian and Arab streets as a result of attempts to exploit the resolutions to save peace to justify concluding a strategic agreement between the United States and Israel to derail peace and strike at the Arab national security.

Duwaydar says that the statement tried to deny this accusation, which world news agencies and television stations noted by asserting that bolstering the peace process and the Palestinian people's situation and fighting terrorism are high on the agenda of this committee meeting. A U.S. spokesman claimed that the differences among the countries participating in this committee do not go beyond arranging the issues and priorities that will be discussed. Duwaydar says apart from this statement that

may be deceptive, there is no doubt that there are basic differences between Washington and most capitals that participated in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit in good faith in fulfillment of President Mubarak's call. These countries support the commitment to the motto of the summit to save the peace process from the danger of the Israeli and Palestinian extremist and violent groups.

Duwaydar expresses his regret at the Israeli Government's efforts, with the U.S. blessing, to achieve the goals of these groups through its practices — repression, starving the people, siege, and the collective punishment of the Palestinian people. [passage omitted]

Egypt: AL-AHRAM on Danger of Radiation Leak From Israeli Reactor

NC2803094296 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0620 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 28 Mar (MENA)—AL-AHRAM has called on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities as regards Israel's indifference; its challenge to international legitimacy, which forbids anyone other than the members of the nuclear club to possess nuclear weapons; and its refusal to remove such weapons, as well as all other weapons of mass destruction, from the region.

In an editorial today headlined "The Consequences of the Dimona Reactor Crisis," the paper writes: The world is uneasily monitoring reports of radiation leakage from Israel's Dimona reactor, which could turn into another Chernobyl catastrophe in the Middle East — especially as there are doubts as to how effective and useful the safety measures taken by Israel are. The paper adds: Egypt is monitoring the situation in the Negev Desert with equal concern, because radiation leaks recognize no borders, nor do they acknowledge barbed wire. Egypt will state its position after completing a study of this matter, which is worrying the Egyptian public.

The paper refers to President Mubarak's statement that Egypt has repeatedly warned of the dangers of weapons of mass destruction and to Egypt's demands to make the Middle East an area free of such weapons, subject Israeli nuclear facilities to international inspection, and have Israel join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Concluding its editorial, AL-AHRAM says: The danger signs are increasing and creating a climate of tension, not only in Israel itself but throughout the region. Even if these reports from the Israeli media about nuclear leakage prove to be inaccurate and unfounded — which we of course hope will be the case, so the region will not experience a catastrophe whose consequences only God knows — in and of itself, this concern should bring Israel's nuclear issue worldwide attention, and place it at the forefront of the concerns of Western governments. They cannot indefinitely allow Israel to continue challenging international legitimacy's ban on the possession of nuclear weapons except by the members of the nuclear club.

Egypt: UN Envoy Views New Mechanism on Iraq

NC2703220996 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2050 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The United Nations, 27 Mar (MENA)—Ambassador Nabil al-'Arabi, Egypt's permanent envoy to the United Nations, has stressed that the measures outlined in the draft resolution endorsed by the UN Security Council today regarding the establishment of a mechanism to monitor Iraq's exports and imports must not infringe on Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Also it must not prevent Iraq from exercising its legitimate right to import or export permitted commodities and the goods and technology necessary to strengthen its economic and social development.

Ambassador al-'Arabi expressed Egypt's concern about the resolution's failure to fix a specific period of time for the validity of this mechanism. He noted that the idea of the mechanism in itself constitutes a new precedent for the UN Security Council because it does not spell out a specific period of time for the mechanism's validity, which arouses Egypt's concern. He said the idea of establishing this mechanism stresses the need to notify it of Iraqi imports and exports of materials that have double uses during the period after the sanctions imposed on Iraq have been lifted. He noted that he gathers from this that starting this system must be associated with reaching this stage early. He said: We hope that Iraq will provide the appropriate circumstances and climate to achieve this goal — lifting the sanctions — through full cooperation with the UN Commission tasked with supervising the destruction of the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, and offer complete statements on all the contents of its banned program. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Iraqi Communications Ministry Delegation Arrives for Talks

NC2803071896 Cairo MENA in English
0645 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, March 28 (MENA)—Iraqi Transport Ministry Undersecretary Engineer Jamil Ibrahim, arrived here early this morning with an accompanying delegation. He is coming from Jordan on a several-day visit to Egypt.

He will have talks with senior officials at the Transport and Communications Ministry on ways to step up bilateral relations in transportation and communications.

Egypt: Musa Notes Differences With U.S. Over Washington Meeting

NC2703194096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa stated today that in the meetings of the follow-up committee in Washington tomorrow, Egypt will focus on ways to protect, support, and continue the peace process, because this was the essence of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit and the decisions it made. The most important factor needed to continue the peace process, he said, is the implementation of what has been agreed upon. He said Egypt is against the violence that hinders the peace process and that terrorism will be discussed in this context out of concern for continuing and protecting the peace process.

Musa said the way to fight terrorism is to improve the economic conditions in the Palestinian territory and to help the Palestinian people obtain their rights by implementing the agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. This, he said, would allay the Palestinian people's sense of frustration and resentment.

'Amr Musa added: To protect the peace process, an appropriate climate must be created to give peace a chance. This is addressed to both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian administration. While asking the two sides to commit themselves to this, we should help them to do it; this can only be done by adopting a balanced method in dealing with the two sides.

Musa said this is the Egyptian view communicated to the Egyptian delegation to the meetings. He said the United States believes a discussion of violence and terrorism should be given precedence. He said there will be Egyptian-European-Palestinian coordination during the meetings.

Asked about the Israeli Government's intention to maintain the blockade against the Palestinians and freeze the negotiations with the Syrians until after the Israeli elections, Musa said: All this harms the atmosphere of peace. I believe such measures cannot achieve peaceful results. Asked about the Palestinian president's upcoming visit to Egypt, the foreign minister said the visit is part of Egyptian-Palestinian coordination. He said that when the Palestinian president expresses willingness to visit Egypt, President Mubarak always welcomes him.

Egypt: 45 MB Defendants Referred for Investigation

NC2703222896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2130 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Mar (MENA)—Public Prosecutor Counselor Raja' al-'Arabi today ordered the referral of 45 defendants who are Muslim Brotherhood [MB] leaders in Cairo, al-Jizah, and al-Fayyum to the Higher State Security Prosecution because it is its jurisdiction to investigate them. The prosecution offices of Cairo, al-Jizah, and al-Fayyum earlier charged them with inciting the masses and possessing leaflets and books containing MB ideology and knives and chains. The prosecution decided today to imprison 12 of these defendants for 45 days pending further investigations. The prosecution office will complete the investigation of the remaining defendants in the next few days.

The security agencies detained these MB members before the 'Id al-Fitr and charged them with planning to distribute leaflets during the 'Id al-Fitr to inflame the masses and incite them to perform their prayers in squares other than those designated by the Awqaf Ministry.

Libya

Libya: Minister Denies Reports of Armed Clashes With Extremists

MM2703114996 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 27 Mar 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Sawsan Abu-Husayn: "Libyan Interior Minister Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: There Are No Extremist Groups in Libya; Reports of Clashes With Them Untrue"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, Nicosia, and AFP — In the first statement by a Libyan official on recent clashes in east Libya between fundamentalists and Libyan security forces, Libyan Interior and Justice Minister Major General Muhammad al-Hijazi has told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that "there are no extremist groups" in Libya. He said that media reports in this connection are absolutely baseless.

Contacted by telephone from Cairo, the Libyan interior and justice minister said that "there are no Islamists in this country who are members of extremist groups, or political prisoners, especially as all the Libyan people are represented in the People's Congresses, with the exception of a very small minority living abroad and calling themselves the Libyan opposition."

Al-Hijazi said that all the media reports of armed confrontations between Libyan security forces and fundamentalist prisoners are absolutely untrue. He added that

"the media should not rely on a reporter circulating reports through al-Sallum [on the border with Egypt]. It is illogical for this crossing point to be used as a source of false news about what is happening in Libya."

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that Libya intends to publicize the confessions made by members of the "drug smugglers ring" which the authorities said the day before yesterday was the target in recent confrontations in Jabal al-Akhdar. [passage omitted]

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi Appoints Farrakhan Assistant Islamic Leader

MM2803101396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 28 Mar 96 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Al-Qadhdhafi Appoints Louis Farrakhan as His Assistant"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, Tunis, Nicosia, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, news agencies — Libya yesterday reopened the coast road leading to the border with Egypt which had been closed since the recent confrontations between those whom travelers and Libyan oppositionists term "fugitive fundamentalist prisoners," and the Libyan security forces and Army. Tripoli reemphasized yesterday that the security campaign is aimed against members of a drug smuggling ring, accusing Western media services of launching "a rabid hostile campaign" against Libya.

At another level, Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi has appointed U.S. black leader Louis Farrakhan as his assistant in the "World Islamic People's Leadership" [qiyadat al-sha'biyah al-islamiyah al-'alamiyah]. The newspaper of the "World Islamic Call" [al-da'wah al-islamiyah al-'alamiyah] society, which has its headquarters in Tripoli, said that members of the "leadership's general secretariat," which Tripoli says includes Islamic organizations from several states, "have expressed their gratitude for the efforts being made by Farrakhan in the service of Muslims in the United States." They said that "this appointment represents support for these efforts and an impetus for Islamic action." [passage omitted]

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi on Terrorism, Peace, Other Issues

JN2803080296 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 23 Mar 96 p 27

["Text" of interview with Libyan President Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi by Muhammad al-Mutawwa', Dubayy Space Channel Television correspondent, "aired live on Dubayy Space Channel Television on 22 March"; place not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Mutawwa'] We welcome you to Dubayy Space Channel. The first question is: What is your relationship with the West regarding the Lockerbie case?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] I greet the Gulf people. We view the Lockerbie issue as a confrontation between the Arab nation and the colonialist forces that stand against the liberation and progress of this nation. This is the stand by the Western countries that are besieging us. Lockerbie is only an excuse. The Arab nation is in a state of confrontation against colonialism, which rejects all solutions. The issue is one of confrontation with colonialism. We passed through many stages of colonialism, beginning with the Crusaders. We admitted the presence of the suspects and presented several solutions regarding their trial, but our solutions were rejected.

I would like to reiterate that the victims are victims, whether they are ours or theirs. We are certain that the suspects are innocent and we believe that the Montreal Agreement must be applied. They should stand trial in Libya. [passage omitted]

[Al-Mutawwa'] The West accuses Libya of being a base for terrorism. What is your stand on terrorism, and what is your view of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] The Sharm al-Shaykh summit was a jolt to the Arab world because it constitutes a real danger to the Arab nation. The summit was ordered by President Clinton over the telephone, even before the hotels and summit venue were prepared. The U.S. President and the Israeli prime minister came with everything in their pockets. This conference will place the Arab nation in an American jail guarded by Americans and Israelis, who will call on the Arabs one by one and accuse them of being terrorists.

The lands of the Palestinians, Syrians, and Libyans are occupied, so how can we describe them as terrorists? Arabs in Jerusalem or Washington will be tried. When the Americans or Israelis say that this president is terrorist, this president will be arrested and tried immediately. I call on the Arabs to stop cooperating with America on the issue of terrorism, which is protected by America itself.

For example: Every member of the Algerian Salvation Front is protected by America. America is not helping us fight terrorism in Egypt and Algeria. They support it because their concern is to strengthen Israel's hegemony. Terrorism targets the Arabs. Therefore, efforts

aimed at labeling the Arabs as terrorists must be undermined.

I would like to affirm that immediately after they [the Israelis] left the "Masonic conference" in Sharm al-Shaykh, they began their terrorism inside the occupied territory. Demolishing houses is an example of this terrorism. This terrorism is aimed at the entire Arab nation. This is terrorism — displaced women and children. This means that anyone who lives in an occupied territory is accused of terrorism, while the contrary is true.

I would like to ask the Arabs who gathered in Sharm al-Shaykh: Have you seen how Israel practices terrorism? If the people houses were demolished were from the West, the whole world would have acted. But because they are Arabs, nobody will act. The Arabs do not have dignity. What we need is a revolution from the ocean to the Gulf. Workers and all people are called on to revolt to defend Arab rights and existence.

They treat us the same way cows are treated in Britain's stables. Why does a Palestinian die? Because he has a sacred cause. Clinton offered Israel $100 million to fight terrorism. Likewise, we should offer the Palestinians $1 billion to fight Israeli terrorism. The Lebanese people are fighting Israeli occupation. Are the Lebanese people terrorists? What is a legitimate struggle? How can we consider this terrorism? We should stage a revolution because we are facing an unbearable situation. I call for the formation of higher or secret committees to resist U.S. and Israeli terrorism. Where is Palestine, which we have known since we were young? Where is the beloved, usurped Palestine now? Where is the PLO, which Yasir 'Arafat formed in 1964? Where is it? Why was it formed?

Were we liars when we talked about the beloved and usurped Palestine? What happened to the songs? We ask those who wrote their doctoral theses on Palestine: If Palestine is the West Bank and Gaza, then why were we struggling and offer martyrs? Were those people engaged in aggression against Israel?

Why did 'Abd-al-Nasir's revolution occur? Because King Faruq betrayed the Palestinian cause before the West Bank and Gaza were occupied. What about the people who died in 1936? Did they die for the West Bank? The West Bank was in our hands. Were we liars? Let us burn our books and curricula and admit that we were liars. Should we do this? I swear that if he [not further identified] asks the Arabs to meet in Baghdad, they will do this, because no one will dare say no.

I am addressing the conscience of the nation, which is now hostage to America and Israel. They destroyed Iraq. Israel possesses nuclear weapons. Why don't they destroy it?

[Al-Mutawwa'] The world was surprised by the deportation of Palestinians working in Libya. What is your comment?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Why don't we talk about the deportation from Palestine? Why are they now in Libya, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. Because they were deported from Palestine. When we deport them, we support their return to their land. I urge all the Arabs to deport the Palestinians to their homes. Only 5 percent of Arab Jerusalem has been left for the Arabs. The self-rule region is also 5 percent. They lie to us and say it has been liberated. The Israelis did not leave; they only redeployed the Army. The Army only left the streets. Yasir 'Arafat is only in charge of the police. I confirm that 35,000 Palestinians will be returned to Palestine after the school year ends. This is called return, not deportation. Where did those people come from? They came from Palestine, and they must return to it.

I challenge Clinton and the whole world to let the Palestinians return to the West Bank. We believe that the issue of the Palestinian people has been resolved, and I challenge them to allow Palestinians to return to the West Bank and Gaza. Why don't we condemn the hideous terrorism practiced by the occupation against the Palestinian people. I call for the formation of revolutionary committees and for raising nationalist banners. I urge the officers and soldiers to stage a rebellion, because the sword hangs over the heads of all Arabs.

[Al-Mutawwa'] What is your position on a political settlement to the Middle East question?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Let them treat us the way they did South Africa. They should return all the Palestinians to Palestine and the West Bank. When 5 million Palestinians return, then free elections can be held. This is the peaceful solution.

All the world's decisions are now in America's hands. However, there is one decision in our hands. When we decide to die, then we can impose our solution. In short, I am not for the use of force and violence. When the Palestinians return and a solution is reached, as happened in South Africa, then I can say that a political solution is possible.

[Al-Mutawwa'] We have a question about the visits to Libya by controversial figures, such as Zhirinovskiy and Louis Farrakhan. Is it possible for Zhirinovskiy to emerge as the winner in Russia?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Zhirinvoskiy launched his own party. Polls show that his party ranks second in popularity. This man is not crazy. He is sensible, because he hates to see his country dominated by anyone. If he assumes power, there will be no world war. He seeks Russia's independence, not war.

The United States is engaged in terrorism against blacks. Why does it want to prevent a man from visiting Libya? This is terrorism. I am about to make a decision launching the world Islamic political leadership. The United States is practicing terrorism in the China Sea, the Red Sea, and the [Persian] Gulf. Who is NATO fighting? NATO wants to fight us, not Russia. NATO is advancing toward us. What is the meaning of the reports that efforts are under way to launch an alliance that groups Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, and Israel? Which parties will such an alliance fight? Such an alliance will fight Syria, Sudan, and Libya. In this regard, I add that Egypt rejected this proposal.

What prompted people in Palestine to commit suicide? Arab acquiescence is what drove them to do so.

[Al-Mutawwa'] Last year, you conducted flights to Mecca. Will you conduct similar flights with your own planes this year?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] The pilgrimage issue is settled. We do not seek anyone's permission to perform pilgrimage. We will fight anyone who wants to fight us. We are going to the House of God. It was God who created us, not the United States. Our rights are clear. Neither the Security Council nor any other agency, for that matter, can force its dictates on us in this regard.

[Al-Mutawwa'] His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates, has called for inter-Arab reconciliation. His calls in this regard were well received. What do you think about this?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Shaykh Zayid is held in high esteem. My relationship with his highness is close and highly cherished. I believe that his calls in this regard are sincere, conscientious, and driven by pan-Arab sentiments. I support his highness's calls in this regard. I call for an Arab summit to examine our current state of affairs, particularly the Sharm al-Shaykh conference.

The Israelis have wreaked havoc on Earth. We must hold an Arab summit and face this state of affairs with all honesty and sincerity. We must meet to end Israeli terrorism. I call for convening an urgent summit in Cairo. I am well aware that President Mubarak will welcome such a call.

In this regard, I would like to note that President Mubarak did not refuse to host the Sharm al-Shaykh conference in Egypt because Clinton came to Egypt as a guest. Would he refuse to receive him?

I would like to say again that I salute His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, His Highness Shaykh Maktum Bin-Rashid Al Maktum, and His Highness Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Rashid Al Maktum, who is an Arab nationalist youth, for their pioneering positions. [passage omitted]

[Al-Mutawwa'] What is your stand on Arab regional groupings? Are they part of the Arab nationalist plan?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] I am for the unity of the Fertile Crescent, the unity of the [Perisan] Gulf, the unity of the Nile Valley, and the unity of the Arab Maghreb. Such unities will not be as bad as we were taught when we were children.

If any unity emerges, that will be fine, not bad. Consequently, I approve the emergence of any Arab grouping, because it will eventually lead to the unity of the Arab nation. I am a soldier of this nation. As such, I am willing to offer everything. We have a plan to launch an Arab union council. We are awaiting the response of Arab officials to this plan, which addresses the issues of economy, information, and defense, among other things.

Sudan

Sudan: Garang Forces 'Heading North'; Ethiopia Denies Involvement

MM2703121696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 27 Mar 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Yusuf Khazim in London and AL-HAYAH in Khartoum: "Garang Tells AL-HAYAH: Our Forces Are Heading North"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Colonel John Garang, leader of the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Movement [SPLM], has said that his forces are heading toward northern Sudan, toward the capital Khartoum, following the transfer last week of their operations against government forces from southern to eastern Sudan.

Garang was talking yesterday to AL-HAYAH via a radio telephone link from Pachala, near the border with Ethiopia, which was recaptured by his forces from the government forces on Sunday [24 March]. He said: "Pachala is the only government stronghold near the Ethiopian border and has a main Sudanese Army garrison. Our forces have destroyed all its defenses over some 60-70 kms. There were 1,500 men in this garrison,

and they were all either killed, wounded, or lost in the forests nearby. We have taken some of them prisoners."

On the reason for opening an eastern front in the war against the Sudanese Army instead of widening the circle of the fighting on the southern front, he said: "I do not wish to talk about our military strategy, but it is important that we advance. The Pachala garrison had large quantities of weapons and strong air defenses. However, the secret of our victory there was that we used the element of total surprise.... The fighting at Pachala lasted only three and a half hours, from 05.00 am on Sunday until 08.30 am of the same day." [passage omitted]

On the Sudanese Government's accusation that his forces had outside help and support to capture Khawr Yabus and Pachala last week, Col. Garang said: "The Sudanese Government has usually justified its failure to its people by blaming its defeats on outside forces. I am not surprised that they have repeated the same tune now, following their defeat in Pachala. However, when I say that we do not receive any outside support, this does not mean that we do not obtain weapons from outside Sudan.... Unlike the National Islamic Front government in Khartoum, we do not have factories producing weapons. However, weapons are available on the international black market."

Meanwhile, an Ethiopian Foreign Ministry spokesman denied his country's involvement in the recent attacks launched by Garang's forces on Khawr Yabus and Pachala. In a statement, of which AL-HAYAH received a copy yesterday, he said that "the Sudanese Government's claims are totally untrue. They are an attempt to distract the Sudanese from the domestic problems faced by their government.... Our foreign policy is clear in this context, namely respect for our neighbors' sovereignty and noninterference in their internal affairs." [passage omitted]

Bahrain

Bahrain: Police Break Up Demonstrations With Rubber Bullets, Teargas

NC2803104596 Paris AFP in English
0933 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, March 28 (AFP) — Riot police fired rubber bullets and teargas to break up a demonstration by around 500 people in a Shiite district of Manama on Wednesday [27 March] night, local inhabitants said Thursday.

The demonstrators, who had gathered in the Sanabis district to protest the execution of a young Shiite who killed a policeman, chanted slogans demanding the release of political prisoners and the restoration of parliament, which has been suspended since 1975.

Riot police fired rubber bullets and teargas to disperse them, but the protestors regrouped and the security forces moved in again, firing more teargas, witnesses said.

"We feared for our lives," a local man told AFP. "Last night the demonstrations were terrifying. I have decided to send the female members of my family to my parents' house. We don't know how long this is going to go on."

Police were out in force around the district on Thursday morning, checking identities and searching cars at a roadblock. Shops were closed and few people were in the streets.

Attackers smashed windows in a new art gallery on Wednesday night in the trendy Adliya district in central Manama, although an opening ceremony went ahead as planned a few hours later, witnesses said.

Police also peacefully dispersed another demonstration by around 100 young people up in the Shiite Diraz district on Wednesday.

Protests erupted after the execution by firing squad Tuesday of 'Isa Ahmad Hasan Qambar, 28, for the murder of a policeman in April 1995.

It was the first execution in Bahrain for 20 years and came amid high tension in the Gulf archipelago.

At least 21 people, including seven Bangladeshis and four policemen, have died in unrest in the past 16 months which has included bomb attacks in hotels and firebombings of restaurants.

The protests are spearheaded by Shiites calling on the Sunni Moslem authorities to restore parliament and to release prisoners.

United Arab Emirates

United Arab Emirates: 'Arafat—Authority Going Through 'Difficult Period'

JN2703202696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic
1800 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Upon his arrival in Abu Dhabi today, President Yasir 'Arafat said the Palestinian National Authority is going through a difficult period due to the recent operations. These operations were used as an excuse to tighten the siege on the Palestinian people and impose a total closure on Palestine on the pretext of security.

President 'Arafat said the recent bombing operations were in the interest of Israeli extremists, particularly the Likud Party. He added that there is an agreement between Israeli and Palestinian extremists on carrying out these operations.

Shaykh Sultan Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan, deputy prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, received President 'Arafat. Shaykh Sultan Bin-Zayid demanded that the international community pressure Israel to lift the siege and end the suffering of the Palestinian people. Shaykh Sultan also urged the international community to explore ways to end violence and terrorism, whatever their source, and to give a new momentum to the Middle East peace process. He urged the United States and Russia, sponsors of the peace process, to make intensive efforts to resume the peace process, in accordance with Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the land-for-peace principle. He stressed that the negotiations must continue on all tracks, especially the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

Iraq: Decree Calls For National Assembly To Convene 7 Apr

JN2703180796 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1712 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 27 Mar (INA)—A republican decree was issued today that calls for the National Assembly to convene on 7 April.

The decree, signed by President Saddam Husayn, reads:

In accordance with the provisions of Article 66 of National Assembly Law No. 26 of 1995, we decree the following:

The National Assembly shall be called to convene on 7 April 1996. The parties concerned shall implement this decree.

Written in Baghdad on 8 Dhu al-Qi'dah, 1416 Hegira, corresponding to 27 March 1996.

The fourth National Assembly's election was elected on 24 March; 220 candidates, out of a field of 689, won Assembly seats. Eight million Iraqi voters participated in the election. In addition, 30 National Assembly members were appointed to represent the Governorates of al-Sulaymaniyah, Irbil, and Dahuk in accordance with a republican decree issued yesterday.

Iraq: PUK Welcomes KDP Response to Peace Proposals

NC2703172196 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1530 GMT 27 Mar 96

[Statement by the official spokesman for the PUK political bureau; date not given—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] PUK [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan] Secretary General Jalal Talabani made an appeal on 16 March on the occasion commemorating the Halabjah massacre, urging Kurdish-Iraqi reconciliation and unification of stances for the sake of carrying out a joint struggle to topple the dictatorial regime in Baghdad. In his appeal the PUK leader also addressed a direct invitation to the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] to end the fighting in Iraq's Kurdistan. KDP leader Mas'ud Barzani's response to brother Talabani's call and the PUK initiatives came during a speech on 21 March to mark Nowruz. The PUK welcomes this response.

To turn this into practical steps, the PUK proposes the following:

1. Holding a meeting between the two sides on a level to be determined by Mas'ud Barzani. The meeting will be attended by representatives of Kurdish parties and Kurdish figures to pave the way for a move from the current situation of fighting to peace. This could be done by strengthening the cease-fire, releasing the detainees, halting slanderous media campaigns, reducing the size of the two sides' forces around Irbil and Salah al-Din, agreeing to form a commission of Kurdish parties to supervise and follow this this, and

2. Inviting the U.S. mediation commission to resume its task in accordance with the principles of [word indistinct] on the basis of the KDP proposal.

Iraq: INA Assails U.S. 'Involvement' in 'State Terrorism'

JN2803114196 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1022 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 28 Mar (INA) — Reacting to a report published by the British newspaper THE INDEPENDENT on 26 March, INA's political commentator stated the following: The British newspaper THE INDEPENDENT published a report incorporating serious information and confessions confirming that the U.S. Administration and its intelligence agencies were responsible for terrorist operations and explosions that occurred in Baghdad and a number of Iraqi cities during the past four years and that the U.S. Administration spent more than $15 million to fund these operations. This came in a confession made by the traitor Abu-Aminah, who recorded his confessions on video cassettes which he disseminated to the mass media.

This information gives hard and indisputable evidence that the U.S. Administration is involved in and adopted terrorist operations aiming to disrupt the security and stability of Iraq and interfere in its domestic affairs. This is only one of the many models that confirm the involvement of the U.S. Administration in exercising organized state terrorism against countries and individuals.

INA's political commentator asserted: At a time when it claims it condemns terrorism and arouses media furor regarding it, the U.S. Administration provides traitors outside the homeland with all the requirements and tools of terrorism, including booby-trapped cars and trucks which claimed the lives of secure and innocent people.

INA's political commentator questions the credibility of the U.S. Administration and its President Bill Clinton vis-a-vis the so-called combating of terrorism in light of these scandals. He wonders: How will he justify committing these crimes against Iraq and the Iraqis? Does the continuation of this approach fall in line with the political, moral, and legal responsibilities of a super power, which is a permanent Security Council member and boasts of being a sponsor of human rights and international law.

The political commentator concludes his statement by saying: This is the approach of the U.S. Administration. These criminal examples represent its tools and methods in confronting the great Iraq, which arms itself with sublime principles and relies on the rallying of its faithful people around the historic leadership of mujahid leader His Excellency President Saddam Husayn, who struggles to surmount the wicked plots against the security of his people and the unity and independence of the homeland. True democratic practice as demonstrated by the Iraqis in the great march day and in the National Assembly's elections is an example that vindicates the rightfulness of their triumphant march toward definite victory.

Iraq: Columnist Criticizes Latest Inspection Team's Practices

JN2803090296 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 20 Mar 96 p 2

["Standpoint" column by Hadi Danyal: "They Should Fulfill Their Commitments"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Now that 143 inspection teams have concluded their missions in Iraq to make sure that Iraq is complying with Security Council resolutions and in light of the problems created by the last inspection team, [Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister] Tariq 'Aziz sent a letter to the president of the Security Council explaining how the aforementioned team fabricated these problems in a premeditated way that smacks of bad intentions. This team, he said, acted in violation of the pledges made by the UN Special Commission; namely, that its methods and practices would not encroach on Iraqi sovereignty, honor, and national security. Team No. 143 acted unreasonably as if the Iraqi state institutions are at their disposal and in the service of its members' whims.

It is as if this state, which was one of the founding members of the United Nations and among those who formulated its charter, had to dedicate the time of its institutions and civil, military, and security departments exclusively for this team. It is as if everyone, from ranking persons to janitors of the smallest departments, had to be prepared to obey immediately and without thinking what their excellencies the inspectors requested at any time and in any place. It is as if the team members could enter Iraqi institutions and tamper with things without asking permission and without showing respect for the privacy of the places that stand as symbols of the entity of the people and the nation.

Creating problems is done to procrastinate, something which the United States wants in order to test its plans or to invent new conspiracies against the Iraq people and their leadership whose steadfastness and cohesion made people aware of U.S. hegemony which is now encroaching on the national feelings and interests of all nations.

The Clinton Administration — like its predecessor and its successor — is wagering on the method followed by the inspection teams, hoping that this will prevent the Security Council and the United Nations from implementing Article 22, in accordance with which the economic embargo will be lifted in exchange for Iraq's implementation of the resolutions disarming it of weapons of mass destruction.

Washington wants Iraq to remain besieged and shackled to serve as a model for anyone who dares to say no to the United States, particularly since it is about to face regional crises in various parts of the world beginning with Cuba, Bosnia, and ending with China.

Iraq is eager not to give those with evil intentions any excuse to prolong the embargo and to delay Iraq's resumption of its legitimate regional and international role. It does not want to give them an excuse to further aggravate the suffering of the Iraqi people. Iraq is also eager to keep the door open for building mutual trust with the United Nations. Therefore, it has always resorted to patience and wisdom driven by its faith in its rights which it will eventually fully restore.

The international community no longer hides its displeasure with U.S. hegemony and its conviction that the United States seeks to take control of all countries and peoples. However, this community and its real pillars, inside and outside the Security Council — whom Washington is trying to ignore and underestimate all the time — should put an end to the violations of the inspection teams so that the embargo on Iraq will be lifted. Consequently, this will end the ugliest aspects of U.S. hegemony that has distorted human will which the Security Council should embody despite all U.S. attempts to distort this will and to conceal its real dimensions and meanings. Iraq has always been committed to this will and has always struggled for the sake of championing and preserving its supremacy.

Iraq: Jordanian Head of Joint Land Transport Company Arrives in Baghdad

JN2603202596 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1020 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 26 Mar (INA)— 'Awad al-Tall, under secretary of the Jordanian Ministry of Transport and head of the board of directors of the Iraqi-Jordanian Land Transport Company, arrived in Baghdad today on a visit of several days.

Al-Tall told the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY that he will lead the meetings of the company's board of directors over the next three days. The meetings will deal with developing the activities of the company's fleet, which includes 250 modern trucks that transport goods and foodstuffs between Iraq and Jordan.

He added that the Iraqi-Jordanian Land Transport Company continues to transport Iraqi oil to Jordan in modern tanker trucks and is the representative of a number of companies that specialize in transporting oil and oil byproducts.

Iraq: Minister Receives Jordanian Transport Delegation

JN2703165596 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1510 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 27 Mar (INA) — Transport and Telecommunications Minister Dr. Ahmad Murtada Ahmad met with 'Awad al-Tall, under secretary of the Jordanian Transportation Ministry and chairman of the Board of Directors of the Iraqi-Jordanian Land Transport Company, and his delegation here today.

The minister stressed Iraq's eagerness to promote transportation cooperation with Jordan and secure a smooth flow of commodities from the port of al-'Aqabah to Iraq. He also called for expanding the work of this company, which is one of the projects that enjoy the support of the Iraqi leadership, to serve the Arab nation's interests and enhance economic and trade growth between Iraq and Jordan.

'Awad al-Tall stressed that the company's board of directors is eager to activate transportation between both fraternal countries by increasing the quantity of commodities transported by the company's trucks.

Iraq: Meetings of Iraqi-Jordanian Transport Company Begin

JN2603210296 Baghdad INA in English 1350 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 26, INA — Meetings of the Board of Directors of the Iraqi-Jordanian Land Transport Company started here today under the chairmanship of Mr. 'Awad al-Tall, Jordanian transport under secretary and chairman of the company's Board of Directors.

The meetings will last for three days. The agenda of the meeting includes discussing the operation report on the company's fleet as well as the financial reports for the year 1996 and the future view to develop the company's work and to ensure the transport of various kinds of goods and oil between Iraq and Jordan.

Mr. 'Ayyar al-'Afi, the director general of the company, said today in a statement that the company had realized during the past year capital and operational profits that reached to 3.134 million Jordanian dinars compared with 1.8 million Jordanian dinars in 1994.

He added that large portion of the profits of last year was achieved in the internal transport in the two countries.

The director general said that the company's fleet had made 20,000 internal and external trips in which 500,000 tonnes of various goods were transported.

He said that the company had drawn plans to increase the transport potentials as soon is the embargo is lifted to make the number of trucks 700 and use electronic services in the trucks to know their positions through linking it with a computer at the company' headquarters. He expressed hope that this system will be used at the end of this year.

Israel: Sarid Denies Egyptian Claims on Dimona Reactor Leakage

TA2803060396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Minister of Environment Yosi Sarid has denied Egyptian claims that the Dimona nuclear reactor is leaking. Egypt says monitors have started checking radiation levels at the border with Israel following the Egyptian press reports of the alleged hazard.

Mahmud Karim, head of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry's disarmament unit, said that experts have begun taking samples of earth and water to test them for radioactivity. He noted that international inspectors have never been granted access to Dimona.

Sarid said that Israel has kept a close watch on the air, ground, and water in the area, and that monitoring had not shown radioactive pollution or leakage.

Israel: TV Report on Dangers of Nuclear Leaks at Dimona Reactor

TA2803095896

[FBIS Report] Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew at 1745 GMT on 24 March broadcasts a special 40-minute investigative report on the Mabat Sheni program entitled "Heavy Water Runs Deep," in which correspondent 'Irit Gal researches the Dimona Nuclear Reactor's [DNR] radioactive pollution hazards. Gal interviews Professor 'Uzi Even, a Tel Aviv University nuclear physicist and formerly a nuclear adviser to the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch chief, who expresses grave concerns over the condition of "many tonnes of radioactive waste which is extremely dangerous to anyone in its proximity."

Gal goes on to describe the special metal barrels constructed at Kibbutz 'En Hashofet to store the low-level radioactive waste from the DNR area. She notes that the barrels are only 8 mm thick and that because of corrosion there is a long-term danger of radioactive leakage. Whereas low-level radioactive waste is buried at the DNR site, Gal notes that high-level radioactive waste is buried in special containers in the Negev desert's Hamakhtesh Haqatan area.

Gal next describes the operation of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission [IAEC], which is located in Ramat Aviv. She notes that "this is where all the important decisions in the nuclear sphere are made. The commission is a powerful body, a closed, elite group whose proceedings are top secret." The chairman of the IAEC is the prime minister, and the director general is Gid'on Frank, whose status is equal to that of the heads of the Shin Bet and the Mosad. Prof. Yuval Ne'eman, formerly director general of the IAEC, next explains the commission's functions and Israel's policy of nuclear ambiguity.

Gal then interviews Uri Marinov, the former Environment Ministry director general, who claims that several years ago DNR personnel hampered the ministry's efforts to monitor the radioactive contamination level at the site. Marinov points out that then Environment Minister Ora Namir obstructed his efforts to obtain reliable information from the site, while Namir retorts by claiming that Marinov did not have a proper security clearance.

Gal stresses that Namir's successor to the Environment Ministry, Yosi Sarid, has embraced a policy of relative openness and has even initiated tours of the reactor site for correspondents. Sarid is shown using a Geiger counter and commenting that the radioactive level at the site "is even a little below the norm." Asked about the burial site for the high-level radioactive waste, Sarid answers: "It is buried in a good place. Let me tell you frankly, there is no point in you pressuring me; this issue has been defined by the person who is responsible for defining it — my boss the prime minister, who can also fire me — as something that should not be publicized." Asked how this waste is buried, Sarid answers: "Using the most advanced technologies in the world." Sarid elaborates: "This material should be buried exactly as it is presently being done. I am extremely satisfied with the manner in which the burial of radioactive waste is being handled, whether of a low, medium, or high-level nature."

Prof. 'Uzi Even, on the other hand, expresses grave concerns about the age of the containers and the burial technology, making the point that Israel is located over an active geological rift and that an earthquake in the DNR area could result in a catastrophe.

The report next turns to Tzvi Kamil, an engineer and one of the DNR's founders, who for the last 10 years has been serving as chairman of the Supreme Committee for Nuclear Safety, described as "an independent committee of experts appointed by the prime minister to supervise nuclear activity in Israel." Gal points out, however, that more than half of its members have been active in one way or another in the IAEC and that it routinely holds its meetings at the IAEC building in Ramat Aviv. Kamil insists, however, that "the committee represents the public interest in the nuclear safety sphere," adding that the containers are in excellent condition and do not require replacement. Prof. Even, on the other hand, points out that the IAEC refuses to cooperate with the public on this issue.

The report next turns to families of workers from the DNR and the Nahal Soreq Nuclear Research Center who have died of cancer. The families claim their relatives contracted their illnesses from radioactive contamination and insist that the reactors' heads refuse to accept responsibility and totally ignore their plight.

Gal goes on to interview Prof. Arye Iser, a geologist, and Dr. Shmu'el Kessler, a hydrologist, who point out that the DNR and Hamakhtesh Haqatan areas are located above a huge underground water reservoir, noting that this fact was not known to DNR pioneers and that this fact poses a very serious contamination hazard for the entire area.

After Gal's report ends, Mabat Sheni anchor Yarin Kimor interviews Giyora 'Amir, formerly director general of the DNR, who reiterates that there is no radioactive leakage at the reactor site itself emanating from the low-level radioactive waste buried there, and that the high-level waste is stored in safe containers according to the highest engineering standards. He stresses that there is no need for concern.

Israel: 'Sources'—Hebron Withdrawal After Passover, Before Elections

TA2803052396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israeli security sources say that the redeployment from Hebron, scheduled to have taken place today, may be carried out after the Passover holiday, if it appears that the Palestine National Council is about to remove the anti-Israel clause from its covenant. Political sources expect the redeployment to take place before the Knesset elections in May.

Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq said the actual operation could be carried out at short notice, since it primarily involves moving IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops in the West Bank town to other positions.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0405 GMT on 28 March includes a related report by correspondent Gil Litman, in which Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, commenting on the conditions for a redeployment in Hebron, is recorded as saying: "When the security conditions for such a redeployment are ripe, the security forces will make their recommendation, at which point it will be possible to carry it out. At this point the issue is suspended and I do not know when it will be carried out."

[Asked about conditions such as the apprehension of terrorist Muhammad Dayf and the cancellation of the covenant, Baraq says: "I do not want to deal with names or details. We expect to see more substantial results in the antiterror struggle. In due time, when the defense establishment considers the time right and that things are really happening on the ground according to the agreement, the Hebron redeployment will be carried out."]

Israel: Commission Findings on Rabin Assassination Reported

TA2803105496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Serious findings and harsh personal conclusions are included in the report issued a short time ago by the Shamgar Commission, appointed to investigate the Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination. The commission determined that outgoing Shin Bet chief Karmi Gilon was formally and personally responsible for the affair and accepted his resignation. The commission also directed formal and personal responsibility at the head of the Shin Bet Security Division and accepted his resignation as well. The head of the VIP Protection Unit, who was suspended immediately after the murder, will not continue in his post. The head of the Shin Bet Operations Branch and the officer in charge of security at Rabin Square will not be able to serve in commanding positions for specified periods — the head of the operations branch for four years and the officer in charge of security at Rabin Square for two years.

The Shamgar Commission also reprimanded Police Assistant Commander Ya'aqov Shoval, stating that this reprimand will be put in his personnel file. The commission determined, however, that police preparations were faultless, except for at the murder site. The commission believes that Assistant Commander Shoval should have made sure that an appropriate police force and commanding officer were deployed in the parking area, even if the Shin Bet did not explicitly ask for this.

No personal conclusions were drawn against the seventh officer who was warned by the commission, the head of the Shin Bet Jewish Affairs Division, even though it was stated that there were faults in the system — especially as far as the dissemination of information was concerned.

The commission urges maintaining stricter supervision of undercover agents. In the secret annex of its report the commission mentions Avishay Raviv and other undercover agents.

Reacting to the report, Karmi Gilon said that after an initial perusal of the report he disagrees with some of the commission's conclusions and some of the facts as presented. He recalls that he had resigned before

the establishment of the Shamgar Commission, but his resignation was not accepted at that time. The former Shin Bet chief emphasized that the commission refuted the speculation about a conspiracy in the Shin Bet to murder the prime minister. He also expressed satisfaction with its conclusions on intelligence issues.

In a written statement, Karmi Gilon warned there are more Jews serving in the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and living all over the country who are still willing to murder the prime minister and political leaders in Israel.

Assistant Commander Ya'aqov Shoval, head of the Yarqon Police Subdistrict, said he feels relieved, but the commission's conclusions cannot diminish the pain felt in the wake of the prime minister's assassination.

Prime Minister Shim'on Peres received the Shamgar Commission report in his Tel Aviv office. Our correspondent Gil Litman was told by his office that Mr. Peres will thoroughly study the report's conclusions and recommendations before deciding what steps should be taken. Cabinet Secretary Shmu'el Hollander sent copies of the report to all ministers, to Major General Dani Yatom, to the prime minister's antiterror adviser, and to the Shin Bet chief.

Israel: Peres—'Amir's Sentence 'Pales Next to His Crime'

TA2703142596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that the punishment meted out to Yig'al 'Amir pales next to his crime and that the assassination of Yitzhaq Rabin runs counter to all the values of the Jewish people. He said he hopes the punishment will deter others from trying to become a supreme judge or God and added that nobody has the right to take the life of another human being. The prime minister was answering correspondents' questions at the end of a female officers' graduation ceremony, and his remarks were reported by our correspondent Pe'erli Shahar.

Lebanon: Islamic Figure Criticizes U.S. Proposal To Halt 'Resistance'

NC2703194896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1745 GMT 27 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Husayn al-Musawi, leader of the Lebanese Islamic Amal Movement, by Mahdi Hasan; date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Hasan] How do you view the U.S. plan to suspend the Islamic Resistance's attacks on the Zionist occupation forces in return for stopping the enemy's bombardment of south Lebanon?

[Al-Musawi] In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. This is the logic of oppressors, arrogant, and wolves. This proposal reminds us of the logic of a thief who breaks into a home and asks the owners to leave him alone to steal. The thief wants the owners of the home to let him steal what he wants. We can not live with thieves, criminals, occupiers, and killers. We are defending our land and right to freedom and independence. The Israelis and Americans behind them are occupiers and aggressors. They are required to leave our land. By our land we do not mean only the Lebanese territory, but the entire Arab and Islamic territories. In our view, these territories are occupied by the Israelis. They are aggressors who came from all parts of the world and must go back where they came from.

[Hasan] I understand that this plan aims, among other things, to convey a U.S. legality on the Zionist occupation of south Lebanon. Right?

[Al-Musawi] The Americans can confer legality on no one. They can take care of their own land. The owners of the land here are the only ones entitled to give legality or not. We give no legality to occupiers, usurpers, and aggressors. [passage omitted]

Our land was invaded and occupied. We will never give legality to aggressors, usurpers, and infidels. The Americans can give legality to the servile lowly. We are absolutely not. We refuse to take our legality from the United States.

[Hasan] As you have said, the U.S. plan underlines the United States bias toward the Zionist enemy. We notice that certain Arab countries and regimes still consider the United States to be an honest broker and can play a productive role in settling the issue in favor of the Arabs. What do you think of this irony?

[Al-Musawi] We know and have read about traitors and those who sold out their peoples and land and repudiate their sanctities and principles. History books are full of names of such people. These rulers who rely on the U.S. oppressor are new idolaters. We repudiate these rulers and those who follow them because they repudiate God. The United States has no right to give legality and the rulers who place their land, peoples, and nation's resources in the service of the United States and Zionism are renegades and their peoples must seek to overthrow them.

Lebanon: Hizballah Chief Views 'Retraction' of Israeli Threats

NC2703084196 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Hizballah secretary general, His Eminence al-Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, has confirmed that the enemy's retraction of its threats is because it has had few chances to carry them out and because of the magnitude of the adventure it would be embarking on, because what the enemy is facing now in Lebanon is unlike what it faced in earlier times.

Nasrallah's remarks came at a meeting with the Islamic Resistance mujahidin who carried out the recent heroic operations inside the occupied zone in the south. He added:

[Begin Nasrallah recording] We believe that the reason for the Israeli retraction which we have heard about in the past few days is not U.S. political pressure, as the enemy says. The Americans want to impose a new situation. The scenario envisions (?suspending) the resistance operations in exchange for the Israelis not carrying out extensive military actions against Lebanon. However, our land will remain occupied, our brothers and sisters will remain in prisons and detention camps, our kinsfolk in the occupied border strip will continue to endure suffering and the humiliation of occupation, and our people displaced from the occupied border strip will remain homeless. In exchange, in order to increase Shim'on Peres' chances of election, the resistance must halt its operations.

I do not believe that this proposal is acceptable to anybody. I tell you with full confidence and faith that what forced Shim'on Peres to retract his threats and bombast are the limited opportunities available to him and the magnitude of the adventure that he might be embarking on. The situation he is facing in Lebanon now is different from before. In Lebanon there are mujahidin, resistance fighters, a steadfast and patient people, and a spirit of defiance, martyrdom, jihad, and victory. Thus, as I have already said, any attempt will be nothing but an adventure. It will definitely not be a picnic. [end recording]

Syria: Israel Blamed for 'State of Dormancy, Inaction' in Talks

JN2803101396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 28 Mar 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-THAWRAH discusses the state of dormancy and inaction in the Middle East peace process. The paper stresses that this state is due to Israel's positions and policy, which fully contradict any movement toward real peace.

AL-THAWRAH says: Israel did not only freeze the Maryland talks, make charges of terrorism against everyone who opposes its repressive policy, and escalate the language of threats and aggression against the Arabs and the Muslims. It also began to warm the military situation in southern Lebanon and to tighten its siege and starvation against more than 2 million Palestinians. It also imposed a state of terrorism and fear which threatens a very serious situation.

AL-THAWRAH says: Undoubtedly, all these acts confirm that Israel does not wish to provide the minimum level of the factors and conditions that will help rescue the peace process. Israel is also not planning to make any positive gesture to revive the hopes of peace and restore credibility to the peace process.

AL-THAWRAH says: Despite these intransigent Israeli positions, we did not lose hope that we can arrive at peace and achieve security and stability in the region. We still hope that the world community, which knows exactly who is obstructing peace and deviating it from the correct path, will pressure Israel to return to the principles and terms of reference of the Madrid conference and to abide by all the requirements dictated by just and comprehensive peace, particularly complete withdrawal from all the occupied territories.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: Israel, whose leaders brag about peace, must understand the truth about the Syrian position, which accepts nothing short of the full return of land and rights in implementation of the UN resolutions. Israel must also understand that occupation is the reason for the conflict and is the cause for all the wars, crises, and problems in the region. Therefore, returning land, ending occupation, and removing all the injustice and unfairness inflicted on the Arabs constitute the real pillars for peace.

Syria: World Urged To Pressure Israel To Declare Desire for Peace

JN2703144396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 27 Mar 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Syria's adherence to the principles of the peace process is a continuation of its positive and active contribution to launching this process and embodies its cooperation with international efforts. Syria wants the peace process to succeed and achieve a just and comprehensive peace.

Without Syria's belief in peace, its concern for it, and its efforts to achieve it, the Madrid conference would not have been convened and it would not have been possible to even talk about the march of peace and prospects for peace in the region.

Peace is still a hope or a possibility, thanks to Syria and its positions. Since the Madrid conference, Israel has made many attempts to derail the peace process and cause it to depart from its approach and principles. Every time Israel attempted to do this, Syria opposed it and put the peace process back on track.

Israel does not want a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy. It wants peace based on its own perspective and wants to impose this perspective on the whole region. Syria, however, along with the Arab people, thinks that incomplete, partial, and imposed peace equals occupation. Peace must be acceptable to the people. For it to be acceptable, it must remove the occupation and preserve the dignity of all. Therefore, Syria emphasizes that peace must be just and comprehensive. To avoid confusion about this concept, Syria was careful to link justice and comprehensiveness to international legitimacy and its resolutions and the U.S. land-for-peace initiative.

The root cause of the conflict and tension in the region is Israel's occupation of Arab land. Therefore, the essence of peace is returning the land and removing the occupation. By giving precedence to security over peace, Israel is putting the cart before the horse. This is why Syria promptly called for resuming the Madrid conference to allow the peace process to achieve its objective.

Israel cannot continue to disregard international legitimacy. Any effort not aimed at achieving a just, comprehensive, and firm peace based on international legitimacy will not succeed. Anyone who wants peace for the region and wants to end tension and conflict must look for the reasons behind the halt of the peace process

and why it has not advanced so far. Knowing the reasons will enable people to find solutions and reach the desired objective.

The international community is now called upon to demand that Israel declare publicly whether it wants peace in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy or not. The road to peace is clear. Other roads lead only to further tension and instability.

Syria: Al-Asad Phones Mubarak on Dimona Nuclear Reactor

JN2703131396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad held a telephone conversation with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak at noon today. They discussed the eventuality of a nuclear leak from the Israeli Dimona reactor and the repercussions it may have. The discussion also dealt with bilateral issues.

Syria: AL-BA'TH Discusses Israel's Nuclear 'Threat'

JN2803093996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 28 Mar 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an editorial entitled "From State Terrorism to Nuclear Terrorism," AL-BA'TH discusses reports on possible radiation leakage from Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor. The paper says such a threat was not out of mind and that several Arab and international quarters warned against it.

AL-BA'TH says: Consequently, President Hafiz al-Asad's telephone conversation with President Muhammad Husni Mubarak yesterday dealt with this serious issue and its possible results. The concern, which the two presidents voiced about reports on the radiation leakage, is very important and legitimate and is dictated by human and pan-Arab conditions, especially since the design-life of this reactor ended several years ago without international atomic organizations being allowed to visit and inspect it.

AL-BA'TH stresses that Israel is the only country in the Middle East that refused to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and refused to allow international organizations to inspect its nuclear facilities.

AL-BA'TH says: If certain well-known powers in the world provided cover and protection for Israel, then these powers now have a special responsibility toward people in this region.

AL-BA'TH says: The pressing task now is to check any existing or possible threat of a nuclear leakage in Israel. Additionally, the issue of removing nuclear weapons in Israel is no less important and pressing, especially since these weapons constitute a real danger to the life of the people of this region and to regional and world peace.

AL-BA'TH concludes: The Arabs, particularly Syria, which signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, support a region free of nuclear weapons. In face of this looming threat, the Arabs are required to defend their people, land, and life in their countries by unifying their position and activity in all fields and in all world organizations. It is also very important to check and deter this danger before we wake up one morning to a catastrophe, the extent and results of which no one knows. In the light of this threat against life and the future, the Arabs should respond to the call for solidarity to deter the serious threats facing everybody, without any exception.

Syria: U.S. Urged To Take 'Fresh Action' on Peace Process

JN2703195796 Damascus SYRIA TIMES in English 26 Mar 96 p 5

[Editorial by Fuad Mardud: "Back to the Original"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Israeli government of Shim'on Peres seems to have decided on a go-for-a-half strategy aimed at freezing Middle East peace talks, or taking them hostage till the end of the coming Israeli elections on May 28 this year.

The chosen boat taken by Israel for this high-damaging strategy in the high seas of the Middle East is to play on the tone of security. The recent Sharm al-Shaykh summit offered the Israelis the frame and the excuse to pursue this policy.

The first indication of that strategy came last month when Peres called for early elections for the Israeli Knesset sending a loud and clear message: peace talks with Syria have to halt for three months first, and then wait for the outcome of the American elections later this year.

What the Israelis do not want to understand is that peace in the Middle East is an urgent need for all peoples in the area including the Israelis, and what holds the cause of peace together today remains profound and solid as it was in 1992 when the Israeli voters voted for the change and dropped the Likud government. If Peres feels that getting tough on peace two months before elections will be good for him and for his Labour Party politically, he certainly commits a terrible mistake that could bring about his outright defeat.

After U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's thirteen trips to the area of the Middle East during the past three and a half years, it is apparent that, while the road to peace remains obscure because of the Israeli ploys, several things are crystal clear:

The first is that the entire U.S. effort to engineer a diplomatic breakthrough is based on the relevant U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and 425, which were initially accepted by all.

The second revelation is that the Israeli government has not shown a commitment to making realistic peace possible, but wants the Arabs to come on the condition of abandoning their long-cherished political positions: to get back their occupied territories. That is to give Israel through negotiations what it has failed to get by war: peace and land.

But, since occupying others' lands does not go with peace and security, the Israelis have made the peace talks a failure by insisting on both land and peace. The peace process has failed to achieve any of its goals except bringing the parties to the negotiation room and keeping them there—but remaining at the table is a thing and achieving results is another.

The U.S. has cards yet to play despite the flawed positions of Israel. If peace is to be saved from the current stalemate, there should be a fresh action from Washington. The Middle East is in a state of waiting. A quick, well-timed new move on the part of the Clinton administration is the only way to end the Israeli attempts to keep the peace process hostage to politics. The sooner the better.

Syria: Government Seen as 'Fort' for Arab 'Vision' of Peace

JN2703195196 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0940 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 27 Mar (SANA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH says that the incomplete vision of peace resulted in unanimous support for the Israeli siege by participants in the Sharm al-Shaykh conference. Both the secret and overt Israeli-U.S. security and military agreements were unanimously approved by all participants, even though there were differences among them before the conference was held. They are now leveling accusations against each other before the conference's committees meet in Washington.

In an article by Dr. Fayiz al-Sa'igh, director general of the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, SANA, and published today, the paper asks: What new Middle East is this where Israeli forces demolish the houses of inhabitants who oppose the self-rule authority and the houses of families of those who are loyal to their homeland and who are defending their honor? What new Middle East is this where Israel is beefing up its forces in southern Lebanon, threatening to invade, destroy, and violate all that is holy?

AL-THAWRAH wonders: What future is there in total cooperation between Peres and 'Arafat to confront those who are defending the future of the Middle East—a future built on national honor and allegiance to the land and to the cause? What future lies in total coordination between the parties that are already implicated and that no longer have control over their own affairs, in light of what has been achieved? The main concern of those who are already involved is Syria, and their goal is to harm its reputation and provoke others against it, both implicitly and explicitly. Their deeply hidden grudges become more of a scandal than the crime their hands have committed and the thoughts that have polluted their minds. They bear more grudges than the well-known historical enemy does.

The article adds: How can these shortsighted individuals assume a responsibility as huge as the Middle East? Those who in the past played roles within the framework of what was planned cannot assume responsibilities bigger than they are. Their credibility does not exceed the level of what the Israeli newspaper YEDI'OT AHARONOT mentioned two days ago.

AL-THAWRAH asserts that the future sought by the people of the Middle East, whether they call it the old or new Middle East, is a future of honor and justice. It is one of a just peace that fully restores land and rights within the framework of the international legitimacy resolutions, which laid down the foundations. Without these foundations, people who seek peace among the allies of the new Middle East will find only hostility, depression, and rancor.

The article concludes: In spite of what has happened and what will happen, Syria, which enjoys the respect and recognition of the entire world, cannot be harmed by a position here or a statement there. Those who hold their heads high see only the top of the mountain and are not concerned with what takes place down among the narrow alliances. The article asserts that Syria will remain an impregnable fort and the strong wall against which the masses of the Arab nation can lean. From Syria's position, the masses can see a vision of the future of the new Middle East for which they have sacrificed.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Explosion Injures Kandahar Residents

BK2703123496 Hong Kong AFP in English 1222 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, March 27 (AFP) — Scores of people were injured when an ammunitions dump blast ripped through the southern Afghan city of Kandahar, the Taleban militia's stronghold, sources said Wednesday [27 March].

"Many people were wounded, including employees of several non-government organisations, when a huge ammunitions depot in the city centre exploded," a defence ministry official said.

"We don't know what the cause of the explosion was, but it was extremely powerful and we have received information suggesting that the Taleban suspect sabotage," he added.

Sources in the city, 450 kilometers (280 miles) southwest of Kabul, confirmed the blast took place overnight Monday, but said they had no information on casualties or the cause.

With scant news getting out of Kandahar, exact casualty figures, and their severity, were unclear.

Sources said though property and vehicles in the area had been seriously damaged.

The blast was far more powerful than a similar explosion which killed more than 60 people in Kabul last month, the defence official said.

Two huge explosions tore through an ammunitions stockpile at the Presidential palace in central Kabul, hurling ammunition, rubble and glass across the city centre.

The Kabul administration, which the Taleban vowed to topple as it besieged the city, said the palace blast was caused accidentally by a diesel heater fire.

However Kabul's rumour mill is still buzzing with stories of conspiracies and sabotage by Taleban spies.

Afghanistan: 25 UN Demining Experts Injured in Kandahar Blast

BK2703142396 Hong Kong AFP in English 1411 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, March 27 (AFP) — Twenty-five United Nations demining experts were injured when a huge blast ripped through a Taleban munitions dump in the militia's southern Afghan stronghold of Kandahar, sources said Wednesday [27 March].

The men, all Afghans, were wounded when the stockpile exploded near their dormitories at a camp five kilometers (three miles) from the city centre early Monday, sources from the area said.

One victim was evacuated to the hospital in the nearby Pakistani city of Quetta after receiving serious injuries when a wall collapsed on him.

Nineteen other men, who reportedly work for a UN demining agency operating in the area, received minor injuries and were treated on the spot, while five others were treated in Kandahar, they said.

The cause of the explosion, which happened at 2.30 a.m. local time (2100 GMT Sunday) is still unknown, and there were no immediate reports of any other casualties, the sources said.

"The explosion occurred in a non-residental area which was mainly occupied by Taleban military personnel," a source said.

"There are no reports of any deaths, but it is possible that some Taleban guards were also injured as the blast was very strong," he added.

The sources from Kandahar, which is 450 kilometers (281 miles) southwest of here, also said that several vehicles belonging to the ATC demining agency had also been damaged along with the agency's premises.

Defence ministry officials earlier said that the massive depot blast had injured scores of non-governmental agency workers in the area.

"Many people were wounded, including employees of several non-governmental organisations, when a huge ammunitions depot in the city centre exploded," a defence ministry official said.

"We don't know what the cause of the explosion was, but it was extremely powerful and we have received information suggesting that that the Taleban suspect sabotage," he added.

The blast was far more powerful than a similar explosion which killed more than 60 people in Kabul last month, the defence official said.

On that occasion, two huge explosions tore through an ammunitions stockpile at the Presidential palace, located in central Kabul, hurling ammunition, rubble and glass across the city centre.

The Kabul administration, which the Taleban who are besieging the city have vowed to topple, said the palace blast was caused accidentally by a diesel heater fire.

However Kabul's rumour mill is still buzzing with stories of conspiracies and sabotage by Taliban spies, allegations which have not been been proved.

Afghanistan: Taleban Fires Rockets on Kabul; 6 Injured

LD2703153096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1430 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kabul city was the target of rockets fired by the Taleban group again today. BAKHTAR reported that a number of rockets landed on residential areas. The security sources' spokesman did not mention the number of rockets fired today. He said, however, that six people who had been injured by these rockets, received hospital treatment.

Afghanistan: Kandahar Bomb Reportedly Kills 'Hundreds' of Taleban Members

LD2703182596 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A bomb explosion in Kandahar has left 25 persons injured. Reports received from Kandahar say that two nights ago at 0230, an explosion occurred in the vicinity of Kandahar's silo which injured 25 personnel of an industrial enterprise. One of the injured persons is reported to be in serious condition.

Eyewitnesses say that the bomb exploded at an ammunition dump. No information is available yet on further losses.

There is no foreign reporter in Kandahar, which is the headquarters of the Taleban group. Because of this, it is difficult to determine the losses sustained by the Taleban group. However, it has been reported that hundreds of the Taleban group were killed and that Kandahar citizens sustained heavy losses of life and material.

Afghanistan: Minister of State on Dialogue, Pakistan

MM2703164696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 27 Mar 96 p 8

[Report by Ahmad Muwaffaq Zaydan: "Afghan Foreign Minister Tells AL-HAYAH: Mestiri Moving in Right Direction, Our Relations With India Not at Pakistan's Expense]

[FBIS Translated Text] Kabul — Dr. Najibollah Lafra'i, Afghan minister of state for foreign affairs, has said that the efforts being made by President Borhanoddin Rabbani's administration to initiate a dialogue among the conflicting parties are not at the expense of, nor do they conflict with, the efforts being made by international organizations.

In a statement to AL-HAYAH in Kabul Lafra'i stressed that UN envoy Ahmed Mestiri (former Tunisian foreign minister) has begun to move in the right direction. The Afghan minister expressed his regret for the policy pursued by Pakistan toward his country, denying that his country's relations with India are at the expense of its relations with any neighboring states.

Commenting on reports saying that the UN envoy is working to return former King Zahir Shah to power, Lafra'i said: "Mestiri stresses that he favors no one and that he is seeking to establish peace. I cannot comment on that. We should respect his statements."

The Afghan minister added: "We have faced some problems with Mestiri in the past because we thought he did not spend enough time in the country and listened to advice from parties not offering neutral views. However, it seems that he has finally begun to move in the right direction."

Asked whether the inter-Afghan dialogue will harm or affect the efforts made by international organizations, Lafra'i said that "the government's policy has always been to keep the door open. Thus we welcome any efforts aimed at securing a settlement to the problem. We do not believe that war is the way to restore peace. As for the efforts made by the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Conference [OIC], we have supported them before, and we hope they will continue."

The Afghan minister added: "We have informed the UN and OIC teams that the inter-Afghan dialogue will continue alongside, not at the expense of, their efforts, because we believe that the solution should be secured by the Afghans themselves. And if we reach an agreement and an understanding with the opposition, we believe it would facilitate UN activities and efforts and eliminate the remaining obstacles. Of course, we prefer to include the two organizations in the peace process, because they would provide broader and wider support for effective future participation in rebuilding Afghanistan — which is important at this stage."

On Washington's inclusion of Afghanistan on a blacklist of states accused of drug trafficking, the Afghan minister said: True, during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan criminal elements had the opportunity to spread and promote drug trafficking. However, I believe that that is exaggerated. Besides, the Islamic State of Afghanistan is working earnestly — despite all problems — to eliminate the cultivation of narcotic plants. It is unfair to include us on the list. I have not seen the report yet. If there is a background to the decision, it could be linked to other matters." On relations with Pakistan and whether there is a way to surmount the crisis, Dr. Lafra'i said: "We wanted to have relations of brotherhood with

Pakistan, and we are grateful for the support it offered to evacuees during the jihad years, even though the jihad was for defending Pakistan too. We felt that certain circles in Islamabad were working to torpedo these relations. Regrettably, with the passage of time we discovered that the matter was not limited to certain circles, but was the government's policy as well. So there was a need to talk about this problem and to refer it to the international community so that Pakistan would realize its mistake."

The Afghan minister said that Pakistani officials did not respond to the appeal to improve relations. He said: "We are ready to do that on the basis of mutual respect and noninterference in others' affairs. When interference is halted and there is a desire to restore relations, there will be no obstacles on our part."

Asked whether he has any evidence of this interference, he told AL HAYAH: I believe that it is not important to talk about that now, because the position is clear in the Pakistani press. It was clearer when Herat and Karashk [as transliterated] were captured and then a curfew was imposed in Pakistani Quetta. People saw hundreds of trucks heading for Kandahar. Everything has now been exposed."

On his country's relations with other states the Afghan foreign minister says: "There are not many embassies in Kabul. Some states, including China and Egypt, will send representatives to study the situation on the ground. We want to have relations with all, especially our neighbors. Our relations with most of our neighbors are good. The only problem is with Pakistan, but there are no obstacles on our part."

Asked whether he agrees with the analysis that there are two foreign camps — one led by Moscow, Delhi, and Tehran, supporting the Afghan Government; and another led by Washington and Islamabad, supporting the opposition — the Afghan foreign minister told AL-HAYAH: "We pursue a policy of positive nonalignment. It is a traditional policy in Afghanistan, even though it was not applied before. We are working on it. In the future we want to establish relations with all states without entering any alliances and without establishing relations with one state at the expense of another. We do not want to establish good relations with India at Pakistan's expense, and vice versa. We do not agree that there is an axis and that Afghanistan is part of it."

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Prime Minister Zia Urges Parties To 'Work Unitedly'

BK2703050896 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has called upon all political parties to work unitedly for the welfare of the people and the country, shunning the differences of opinion. She made this call after the passage of 13th Amendment Bill of the Constitution for the formation of nonparty caretaker government at the Jatiya Sangsad [Parliament] yesterday. The prime minister said the 13th Amendment Bill is a (?distinct) milestone and with this our commitment to hold all future elections with the participation of all political parties has been fulfilled.

Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina has said her party has been struggling to establish the people's right to vote freely so that they could become the (?means) to (?ascend) to state power. Speaking at a rally organized to mark the silver jubilee of Independence and National Day in Dhaka yesterday, the Awami League chief appealed to the people not to take law in their own hands and maintain peace. She reiterated her call for the resignation of prime minister and formation of a neutral caretaker government to end the [word indistinct] political crisis.

Jamaat-e-Islami also organized a discussion meeting on the occasion. Speakers at the meeting stressed the need for formation of caretaker government to ensure voting rights of the general masses.

Bangladesh: Zia Asks Biswas To Endorse Caretaker Government

BK2703154496 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has requested President Abdur Rahman Biswas to take all the necessary steps for an endorsement as soon as possible of the constitutional amendment bill relating to the setting up of a nonparty caretaker government, which was unanimously passed by the sixth parliament. She made the request during a meeting with the president at the President House this evening. The prime minister also requested the president to take steps for setting up a nonparty caretaker government as soon as possible after the bill is endorsed. Recalling the statement made by her during her earlier meeting with the president on holding parliament elections by next May, the prime minister requested the president to take steps to implement it.

Bangladesh: Biswas Signs Caretaker Government Bill; Polls Expected

BK2803075796 Hong Kong AFP in English 0746 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, March 28 (AFP) — President Abdur Rahman Biswas on Thursday [28 March] signed a landmark bill paving the way for all future elections in Bangladesh to be organised by a neutral caretaker government, official sources told AFP.

The bill which now becomes law, fulfills the main demand in the opposition's long-running campaign to topple Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

The signing of the bill paves the way for the immediate resignation of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's government, the formation of a caretaker government and the holding of fresh elections.

The Constitutional (Thirteenth) Amendment Bill 1996 was passed unanimously by parliament Tuesday and the signing came after Zia, in a surprise move, urged Biswas late Wednesday to sign the document.

The sources said Biswas decided not to delay the process and thus the bill was not sent to the Supreme Court for its opinion.

Bangladesh: Officials Stage Sit-in for Zia Resignation

BK2803044596 Hong Kong AFP in English 0423 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, March 28 (AFP) — Bangladeshi officials Thursday [28 March] defied a police ban on demonstrations inside the government secretariat complex and were staging a sit-in to force Prime Minister Khaleda Zia resign.

"This campaign will go on until a neutral caretaker government is formed," one of the leaders of the "Officer Employees Liasion Committee told several hundred employees at the main gate of the complex housing most government ministries, as more entered after police officers checked identification.

He criticised the police ban, the first ever inside the complex, and said "no conspiracy" can stop this campaign.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police issued a statement late Wednesday imposing a ban on marches and demonstrations at the secretariat for nine hours from 6:00 a.m. (0000 GMT) Thursday.

The ban was also in force on two adjoining roads, where army troops and the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles stood guard along with a large police contingent.

The sit-in came as the opposition continued its campaign to force Zia to step down with the resumption of its "non-cooperation" campaign, or nationwide strike.

In front of the nearby Press Club the main opposition party, the Awami League, continued its indefinite sit-in.

Zia urged President Abdur Rahman Biswas to take immediate steps to form a neutral caretaker government and sign into law the bill allowing it, which was passed by parliament on Tuesday.

Government secretaries, the top Bangladeshi civil servants, also urged Biswas to bring about a neutral caretaker government, saying it was becoming impossible to work normally.

The officials expressed "deep concern" about the crisis, saying: "The administration, law and order situation and the economy has collapsed. The country was now confronted with a serious crisis."

Government secretaries are the top ministry officials after politically appointed ministers.

Employees at the secretariat complex have been staging demonstrations for the past several days calling for implementation of the opposition demands.

The opposition, led by Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League, has been campaigning for the past two years for elections under a neutral caretaker government, and alleges that free polls are not possible under Zia.

From last year it has been pushing for Zia's resignation.

India

India: Regulatory Board Cites Nuclear Plant Safety 'Shortcomings'

BK2803040896 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 27 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Several safety-related shortcomings in India's nuclear power plants require attention, says the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB). But it says none of these shortcomings could lead to a Chernobyl-type catastrophe.

In a report based on periodical reviews, the AERB said it was desirable to effect improvements and modifications in the emergency core-cooling systems of reactors. Further evaluations and in-depth inspections of zircalloy pressure tubes in pressurised heavy water reactors for their integrity were also needed said A.Gopalakrishnan, chairman of AERB.

The AERB is an independent regulatory body for the country's nuclear facilities.

The report has also recommended improvements which could further reduce workers' exposure to radiation and lower the potential for leakage from radioactive systems. Evaluation of structural response to earthquake forces in some of the facilities and preventive measures related to fire safety and flooding have also been recommended.

The AERB evaluation has not revealed any deficiency which would warrant restrictions on the operation of a unit, Mr Gopalakrishnan said "In our judgment, no existing shortcoming could lead to a nuclear disaster or a Chernobyl-type catastrophe in the Indian nuclear installations."

Mr Gopalakrishnan said for each of the items identified, the installations concerned and the AERB were Jointly preparing the preliminary details of corrective action and a schedule for implementing them.

These will be reviewed and finalised by the AERB safety review committee and the Board, for timely Implementation later by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) he said.

The DAE organisations whose upgradation needs were covered in the document include the Nuclear Power Corporation, the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, the Nuclear Fuel complex, the Uranium corporation of India Limited, the Heavy Water Board and the Indian Rare Earths Limited.

Mr Gopalakrishnan said assessment of the overall safety of nuclear installations from time to time was a common practice among nuclear regulatory agencies. So the latest exercise of AERB should be viewed in this perspective, as a necessary measure to continually maintain a high level of safety in the Indian nuclear installations, he added.

India: ISRO Official—PSLV-D3 Launch 'Significant Milestone'

BK2703124096 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 22 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by V.R. Mani: "Satellite Is Put Into Orbit"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Indian space research programme received a boost today when the third developmental flight of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-D3) was successfully launched from here, placing a 930 kg Indian remote sensing satellite, IRS-P3, into a near-polar sun synchronous orbit.

The four-stage, 44-metre tall vehicle with a lift-off weight of about 283 tonnes using both solid and liquid propellants lifted off at 10.23 am. About 17 minutes later, the satellite was placed in its "precise" orbit.

ISRO [Indian Space Research Organization] Chairman K. Kasthurirangan, who sat through the final countdown at the missile control centre, told the scientists that it was a "significant milestone in our programme. Today, we have witnessed a perfect flight. It is a success you richly deserve."

Stating that it was a very proud moment, coming as it did in the wake of the two recent major successes, INSAT-2C and IRS-1C, Mr Kasthurirangan said the effort, sincerity and dedication of the scientists had paid off. "I am sure the final capability will be shown in the next PSLV mission," he said, adding: "we are now on the threshold of operationalisation of this vehicle."

He said: "From here we go to the next PSLV mission and the equally and probably much more important GSLV (Geo-Stationary Launch Vehicle) by 1997-end or early 1998."

Mr Kasthurirangan told reporters later that the ISRO had developed a lot of confidences and it could commence commercial launches from the next flight itself.

Today's launch, he said, was one of the most precise ones. The next flight, he said, would take place between 18 and 24 months from now.

Mr Kasthurirangan said 70 seconds after the satellite was placed in the orbit, its solar panels were deployed. The ISRO ground station in Mauritius got the first data from the satellite. The satellite was now in the inertial mode and tomorrow it would be activiated.

With the successful launch of the remote sensing satellite by the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-D3) from Sriharikota today, India has now eight home-built satellites in orbit. The launch has also opened up the possibility to tap a lucrative international market for satellite launch and sale of remote sensing data.

The PSLV-D3, on its third and final developmental flight, placed the 930-kg remote sensing satellite (IRS-P3) into its "precise" orbit, 17 minutes after the launch vehicle's lift-off at 10.23 a.m. today.

IRS-P3 was put into an 817-km polar sun synchronous orbit. It is the third time the PSLV launch has been successful. IRS-P3 is India's fourth remote sensing satellite in orbit.

ISRO, through its commercial wing Antrix, has already started to market the remote sensing data gathered by various Indian satellites.

With the validation of launch technology, ISRO now hopes to offer commercial launch of up to 1,000 kg

satellites in the 900-km orbit. The annual market for this segment is around $100 million. ISRO hopes to launch a satellite for $ 10-12 million against the current market rate of $ 15-20 million charged by European and American companies.

Mr Kasturirangan recently said that Malaysia has approached India to help launch its satellite. Indonesia is another potential customer.

ISRO can now go ahead with the preparation to launch the next generation rocket, the geostationary satellite launch vehicle (GSLV) in late 1998. The more powerful GSLV is needed to launch communication satellites of the INSAT series, weighing over 2,00 kg. The third stage of the four-stage PSLV will be replaced by a cryogenic engine which is being fabricated with Russian help to build the GSLV.

The first stage of PSLV-D3 carried a motor and 129 tonne of propellant and measured 2.8 metre in diameter. The solid fuel was home-built Vikas engine and carried 37.5 tonne of liquid propellant- unsymmetrical dimethyl hydrazine as fuel and nitrogen tetroxide as oxidiser. The third stage used a 72-tonne HTPB-based solid propellant and the motor case was made of Kevlar fibre. The fourth and last stage of PSLV had a twin engine configuration using liquid propellant.

Over 150 industries, both in the private and public sector, were involved in the fabrication of a variety of hardware like tight alloy structures, motor cases, electronic packages, heat-shield and radars.

It carried three remote sensing payloads and another for X-ray astronomy. One of the remote sensing payloads is a wide field sensor (WIFS), similar to that of IRS-1C but with an additional short wave infra-red band. This additional band, being sensitive to moisture content in vegetation, provides additional data for crop condition assessment. Its other applications include snow and cloud cover differentiation, snow-melt run-off studies, flood damage assessment and geological studies.

The second payload is a modular opto-electronic scanner of the German space agency DLR. This will primarily be used for ocean- related studies such as chlorophyll mapping for biomass estimation, coastal water discrimination, sediment transport and ocean dynamics.

According to scientists, data from both these payloads will be useful for plant applications like vegetation index monitoring (to study forest cover or food grain crop estimation), biomass and desertification studies, atmospheric studies, such as aerosol or cloud analysis, optical turbidity (pollution monitoring) cloud and snow discrimination and water vapour content in the atmosphere.

The X-ray payload will be used to study cosmix X-ray sources and transient X-ray sources.

IRS-P3 will be monitored and controlled from Hassan in Karnataka with a network of stations in Bangalore, Lucknow, Mauritius and Wellheim in Germany and Bearslake near Moscow. The IRS-P3 data will be received and processed at the National Remote Sensing Agency, Hyderabad. The data from the German equipment on board will be received by a ground station at Neu Strelitz, near Berlin.

India: Minister Proposes Plan for Boosting ASEAN Ties

BK2603131496 Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English 14 Mar 96 p 11

[DECCAN HERALD News Service report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, March 13 — Union Minister for External Affairs Pranab Mukherjee today proposed a seven-point action plan for expanding economic relationship with the Association of South East Asian Nations, ASEAN, in the eventuality of India becoming a fun dialogue partner of ASEAN.

While inaugurating the symposium on 'India full dialogue partner of ASEAN — New Opportunities' organised by FICCI [Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry] here today, Mr Mukherjee said that as a first step, there was a need to mount a massive "India brand imaging" effort in ASEAN countries for which both government and business have to work together.

This effort has to be preceded by expanding the information base that India has on individual ASEAN countries and on the new ASEAN matrix of trade and economic relationship. It was important, he said, to refurbish India's image since there was an image lag between the business communities of India and the ASEAN.

"For too often do we find ASEAN trade and industry, with some exceptions, still viewing India in a time warp of an inward-looking and uncompetitive giant which was weighed down by its own contradictions. Although perceptions in many metropolises of the world about India have changed dramatically, these are yet to fully transmute themselves into the ASEAN psyche," he added.

Mr Mukherjee underscored the need for strengthening the ASEAN-India Business Council which has been meeting along with the official dialogue committee.

Mr Mukherjee urged the business community to set a target for establishing at least 2 or 3 major impact

projects every year in India, in one of the ASEAN countries or in third countries with ASEAN collaboration. Many ASEAN companies are already participating in infrastructure and industrial ventures in India.

In his address, Mr Deepak Banker, president, FICCI, said that India could now synergize with ASEAN not only in the limited sectors of trade, investment, science and technology and tourism as sectoral dialogue partners, but as a full dialogue partner. The annual growth rate of India's exports to ASEAN during 1994-95 had picked up to a phenomenal level of 40 per cent per annum, 28 per cent to the EU and 18 per cent to Japan.

Speaking on the occasion, A.N. Ram, secretary in Ministry of External Affairs, said that while evolving the project contours of India's participation in ASEAN region, care has to be taken to conceptualise the connectivity with other regional blocks like EU, the emerging APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] and the India Ocean Rim. Mr K.L. Chugh, former chairman, ITC [Indian Trade Corporation] Ltd. said that the business content of India's cooperation with ASEAN countries should be crystallsed with a view to attract foreign direct investment from the newly industralised countries in the region.

India: TV Election Broadcasts Inciting 'Violence' Banned

BK2703133496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Election Commission has issued a code of conduct for television broadcasts in connection with the elections. Briefing news persons about the code of conduct, the chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, said the code is to ensure that television is not misused and functions in the best interest of democracy and the voter.

According to the model code, there should be no coverage of any election speeches or other material that incites violence or religion, caste, or language divide.

India: Delhi Rejects Criteria for Permanent Membership of UNSC

BK2803104196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has rejected suggestions which allow Germany and Japan to automatically become permanent members of the Security Council and prescribe a complicated procedure for the developing countries. Addressing a working group on the expansion of the Security Council at the United Nations yesterday, Indian Ambassador Mr. Prakash Shah said that New Delhi does not agree to the suggestions made by some advanced countries, which meant preferred treatment for industrial countries and second-class treatment for the developing nations. Mr. Shah reiterated the position taken by several nonaligned countries that criteria should apply equally and without any discrimination. The views expressed by India was supported by several countries, especially from the developing world.

Iran

Iran: Floods Cause 'Considerable Financial Damage'

LD2803100296 Tehran IRNA in English 0921 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 28, IRNA — Flood and thunderstorm have hit several provinces of the country following the heavy rainfalls of the past few days, killing at least 14 persons and injuring three others.

The floods have inflicted considerable financial damage to farmlands and houses.

In the southwestern province of Khuzestan, 34 villages are surrounded with water after the rivers of Jarahi, Karkheh and Karun rivers burst their banks.

The damage caused is estimated around 23,178 million. The damage inflicted on roads and infrastructural installations is put at rls. 6,860 million [rials].

Furthermore, 13 persons lost their lives in Khuzestan Province as a result of thunderstorm, floods and landslide and 24,000 hectares of farmlands were damaged and 1,840 livestocks were killed. Also 548 kms of urban and rural roads were damaged and 54 bridges were destroyed.

Relief operations continue in this region and tents, canned food, heaters, blankets and clothes have been sent to flood-stricken areas of the province.

In Saveh, Central Province, one person was killed and three injured while 250 livestocks were killed. The financial damage inflicted on the city has been estimated at about rls. 1,000 million.

In Lorestan Province, rls. 1,700 million of damage was inflicted on industrial units.

Meanwhile, a large number of houses along the Khorramabad river have been washed away by floods. Power cuts have also been reported in northern, northwestern and eastern parts of Lorestan Province as a result of strong winds and rainfalls.

In Farsan, Chahar Mahall-Bakhtiari Province, rls. 250 million of damage was inflicted on power installations and roads.

Connection of 180 villages with urban areas have been cut off in Farsan. Connection of all the villages of Bazoft district with the urban areas was cut off due to more than 60 cm of snow and avalanche in Shah Mansuri Pass.

Meanwhile, the Hirmand river, in Sistan-Baluchestan Province, overflew on Tuesday following seasonal rainfalls. However, the water was controlled and channelled to Hamun Lake.

Iran: Iran 'Opposed to Investment in Nuclear Weapons'

LD2703172296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The spokesman of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran has regretted remarks by the United Arab Emirates [UAE] deputy foreign minister expressing concern over the presence of nuclear power stations in Iran.

The spokesman, Mr. Mohammadi, said such remarks are influenced by the joint propaganda campaign of America and the Zionist regime against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He added: It is regrettable that the UAE official does not acknowledge the nuclear threat of the Zionist regime, but instead choses to voice concern over the possibility of Iran acquiring nuclear capabilities in the future.

He said: The Islamic Republic of Iran is opposed to investment in nuclear weapons. Furthermore, we were the first country to propose to international forums that the Middle East should become a nuclear-free region, and at present we are making serious efforts to make this possible.

Iran: IAEO Statement on 'Peaceful Nature' of Nuclear Program

NC2803073996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0230 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The [Iranian] Atomic Energy Organization [IAEO] has restated the peaceful nature of our country's nuclear activities. According to IRNA, following remarks by UAE officials, doubting the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities, the IAEO issued a statement saying: The Islamic Republic of Iran is a signatory of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and is an active member of the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA].

Elsewhere, the statement clarifies that such apprehension is not befitting for a neighboring Muslim country and is a repetition of baseless allegations, which are sporadically disseminated by Israel and the United States to agitate people worldwide.

Iran: Contractor Details Nuclear Plant Construction

NC2803070796 Tehran SALAM in Persian 17 Mar 96 p 4

[From the News Desk]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the spring of 1369 [year beginning 21 March 1990], the decision by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the country's Energy Council, headed by the president, for the completion of the Bushehr nuclear power station was conveyed to the chief of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization [IAEO]. This plan had remained incomplete since the Islamic Revolution. Finally after numerous starts and stops, and despite a plethora of Western reports against the plant and Iran's efforts, the contract was signed between the Atomic Energy Organization and the Russian company Zarubezhatomenergostroy in the month of Dey [22 December-20 January] last [Iranian] year.

There are numerous questions on this issue that have remained unanswered so far, including: How was this plan abandoned in an incomplete state by the Germans? What was the fate of the equipment (7,000 tons of it) not delivered by Germany to Iran ? What steps were taken for vindicating Iran's rights in the arbitration courts by the IAEO..., and finally, what happened to the documents regarding the equipment installed in the power plant and why were they not handed over to Iran?

The head of the company's office in Iran, Anatoliy Zhilinskiy, was interviewed by a SALAM correspondent and replied to six questions that were to put to him:

[SALAM] Mr. Zhilinskiy. There has been mention of a series of documents that are required for the completion of the Bushehr power plant. Are these documents in the custody of the Germans and should they be obtained?

[Zhilinkskiy] Yes. This is correct. The German company carried out some work which, of course, has been suspended for quite some time. On the basis of a contract, we have been obligated to complete the power plant using Russian equipment; and at the request of the Iranian side, we are retaining the previously-installed equipment. Unfortunately, some of that equipment does not have any technical documents from the factory and in view of the importance of the power plant, we are not authorized to use technical equipment without relevant documentation.

Of course, the IAEO, which is our employer, should procure the aforementioned technical documents. However, we will obtain all other documents required for the completion of the power plant.

[SALAM] Has the IAEO—which is to give you these documents—taken any steps in this regard? Can your company carry out the work without these documents?

[Zhilinskiy] The IAEO has pledged—on the basis of the contract signed—to procure these documents from Germany. If this is not done, we will be obliged to remove the equipment installed because it lacks the requisite documentation. Therefore, you must bear in mind that this task (obtaining the technical papers) is extremely important. Of course, Iran has already paid the German company and so they are obligated to hand over the technical documents.

[SALAM] According to the latest reports from the power plant, Russian experts are supposed to dismantle the equipment installed earlier, for which an estimated period of a year has been envisioned, which was not stipulated in the contract. What justification do you have for this new condition?

[Zhilinskiy] Allow me to give you detailed clarifications in this regard. I read a lot of your publications, but unfortunately there are numerous errors regarding such issues.

The report that Russian experts are to dismantle the previous installations has no relation to the facts. The previous structure, which had been built earlier, will certainly be retained. On our request and according to our company's planning, the Iranian side will renovate a part of the buildings. Therefore, I stress that only for the installation of Russian equipment will some of the buildings be renovated, and all the reconstruction work has been pre-approved in the contract.

You should note that all the renovation work will be carried out by Iranian companies, of course, in accordance with the plans and diagrams of our company. After Iranian companies have completed the renovation work, our company will commence its actual work.

The volume of work to be carried out by the Iranian companies is in proportion to the volume of our work and there is no reason that these companies will not be able to complete the reconstruction work on time. I am confident of their work.

Of course we have begun the task of planning, prior to which we carried out a series of technical investigations at the power plant. I emphasize that the report you have referred to is not true. (Editor's note: This report disseminated by IRNA cited an INTERFAX report published on 28 January 1995)

Besides, work on planning and reconstruction is proceeding according to the schedule set forth in the contract. The duration of the contract is 55 months. The contract specifies that the work will be completed in 55 months. Of course you know that the delineated timeframe is an estimate, and once the work begins, it can be amended. We predict that we will meet all our deadlines, and our employer, the IAEO, makes the same commitment.

[SALAM] It has been said that your standards are different from the Western (German) standards. According to news reports, work on two nuclear power plants that you were building in the former East Germany was halted after the two Germanies were united. What explanation do you have in this regard?

[Zhilinskiy] I am not the German Government's spokesman and I do not know the reason for their decisions. For your edification I can say that Aleksandr Oneka, our company's senior engineer, is currently working in Bushehr. Prior to this, he worked at the East German power plant you mentioned.

The Bushehr nuclear power plant is being built to international standards. Of the power plants we have built, there is the "Luiza" plant in Finland, which is a first class plant, one of an extremely high standard and with a high safety level. All our work is carried out under the supervision of the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency], which has praised the high quality of our work. The IAEO's nuclear safety department is also supervising our work.

I should explain that we put the 70-megawatt nuclear power plant "Rheisenberg" [as transliterated] into operation 30 years ago, in East Germany in 1966. Another power plant named "Nured" [as transliterated], with five 440-megawatt units, was put into operation in 1374. The power plant you mention is the "Stendhal," which has two 1000-megawatt units, and all these units were suspended after the unification of the two Germanies. I do not think that the reason was a lack of guarantees or safety at the power plants we built.

Germany is an extremely progressive country, economically, and heads the grid of power production sources. This country has distinctive rules for the construction of nuclear power plants and the use of nuclear power. After reunification, Germany decided it did not require foreign equipment.

Do you know that right now Finland, Hungary, and the Czech and Slovak republics, are using power plants built by our company? This shows the high quality of

the work our company does, work that conforms to international standards.

[SALAM] Once the plan is completed and the 55-month period of the contract has elapsed, what guarantees are there for the supply of fuel to Iran, since you have signed a separate contract with Iran for the supply of fuel?

[Zhilinskiy] You know that the agreement between the governments of Iran and Russia was signed by Dr. Amrollahi, our vice president, who is the head of the IAEO, and the Russian energy minister. On the basis of this agreement, we will be involved not only in the Bushehr nuclear power plant but in other areas as well. There are several agreements that must implemented. You are aware that all these agreements, including the one on nuclear fuel supplies to Iran, fall within the overall agreement signed by our governments, which includes provisos on decisions regarding breach of contract by the two sides.

If these guarantees were not incorporated, these agreements would have no value. I was present when these agreements were signed, as was the Iranian ambassador to Moscow. Lastly, the agreement was signed by Amrollahi and Mikhaylov; therefore no one intends to treat these issues casually.

[SALAM] The issue here is not one of treating things lightly. I meant the occurrence of unforeseeable or unexpected incidents, which the Russians, including your company, may use as a foundation.

[Zhilinskiy] The agreement on the supply of fuel to the power plant was signed even before the contract for its completion came into effect. The agreement stipulates that the fuel required by Iran will be delivered over 20 years and that if the need arises or the two sides agree on it, the period can be extended.

[SALAM] What is your opinion of the signing of a separate agreement for the construction of a separate power plant, planned, constructed, and equipped from scratch by Russians?

[Zhilinskiy] We are interested in such an agreement. Building a nuclear power plant from scratch is easier and better for us. But Iran intends to complete the Bushehr power plant and our country has agreed. It is a difficult task. We have submitted a proposal for the construction of a new power plant in Bushehr but this has not yet been approved. It seems approval has been postponed until after the completion of the [current] nuclear power plant in Bushehr.

Iran: Nateq-Nuri Says Goal of Political Independence Attained

LD2803071796 Tehran IRNA in English 0547 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sari, Mazandaran prov., March 28, IRNA — Majles speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri said here Wednesday [27 March] that in terms of political independence the Islamic Republic of Iran has achieved all its targets.

Speaking at the meeting of the provincial administrative council, he added that in economic field Iran's progress is acceptable.

The Majles speaker who arrived here Wednesday morning to inaugurate several development projects, said that Iran's goals of independence and freedom in foreign policy have undoubtedly been materialized and this has been proved to the world.

Turning to the recent Sharm al-Shaykh summit, he said that the meeting brought about nothing but disgrace to its organizers.

"Iran's stand on liberation movements of the Palestinian Muslims is unchangeable and we are proud of this stance," said the Majles speaker.

Iran: Sharm al-Shaykh To 'Impose More Restrictions' on Iran

NC2703192496 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 12 Mar 96 pp 1, 11

[Commentary: "The Session of World Terrorists in Egypt!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A session of the heads of some Arab countries, Israel, and the United States is to be held in Cairo, the Egyptian capital tomorrow. As was stated earlier, the aim of this conference is "to combat terrorism." However, the presence of individuals such as U.S. President Bill Clinton, whose record of crimes against the Muslim nation is known to all, and Shim'on Peres, the "murderer of hundreds of oppressed Muslim Palestinians" and the leader of the bloodthirsty Zionists, as well as Husni Mubarak, the murderer of Egyptian Muslim combatants, at this session is the reason why political experts have labeled this session "the conference of world terrorists!"

According to news agencies, the U.S. objective—at a time when there is an extensive propaganda blitz being carried out against Iran by the Zionist circles—is to coordinate these propagandist attacks in order to exert greater pressure on Iran. As it did in the past, the United States will try to get the concurrence of its allies and

the European countries. The United States will also strive to create a rift between Iran and Syria. And if the United States does not succeed in convincing Syria to participate in the session, Washington will attempt to boost solidarity among the conference's participants to exert greater pressure on Syria.

The AL-AHRAR newspaper, published in Egypt, commented on the eve of the conference: "U.S. President Clinton is the greatest terrorist in the world. And Shim'on Peres is a criminal murderer who has massacred the Arabs and his hands are dripping with the blood of the Arab people. His latest atrocity was the murder of the combatant Yahya 'Ayyash and he has now come to Egypt to honor us! This conference has been imposed on the people who are themselves under the pressure of terrorist operations!"

The Voice of America government radio stated in a report that Iran has not been invited to this conference. However, just as our Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati stated, Iran believes that the anti-terrorism conference should have been convened by the United Nations and not by countries seeking their own political interests.

The Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects the Westerners' baseless accusations about support for terrorism and has consistently declared that it is itself one of the main victims of international terrorism.

The recent planting of bombs in occupied Palestinian cities which resulted in the killing of scores of Zionists was the main factor for holding the conference. However, knowledgeable political experts say that because the recent operations took place three months prior to the elections of the regime in Occupied Jerusalem, they could well have been carried out by rival Israeli factions.

It can be predicted right now what the outcome of such a conference will be and what the content of the resolutions will be. However, one thing is certain and that is that the Zionists' and the Americans' hollow claims against Iran are so ridiculous that no one will believe them.

In the end, the conference of the leaders of the world's terrorists can be considered just another effort by the United States to impose more restrictions on Iran and that is all.

Iran: Tehran Militant Clergy Heads on Elections

NC2703074496 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 17 Mar 96 pp 1, 2

[FBIS Translated Text] The participation of more than 24 million people in the fifth term Majles elections once again proved the Iranian people's faithfulness to Islamic and revolutionary principles and values.

The public relations office of the Tehran Militant Clergy reports that this was stated by Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri at a meeting of several candidates who were elected in the first round of the fifth term Majles elections. The Majles Speaker added that the vast turnout stemmed from the Iranian people's religious beliefs and said: The fifth term Majles elections were actually a renewal of allegiance by the people to the system and the leader.

During this meeting, several people who will go on to the second round of elections were also present. Mr. Nateq-Nuri said: The clergy, as heirs of the holy Imams, have the mission to propagate God's religion and direct the people. We have entered the elections in order to carry out our divine duty.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Nateq-Nuri said that the clergymen are not leaving the scene so that the revolution will not be diverted from its path and the history of the Constitutional Movement will not be repeated.

Speaking at the Tehran Militant Clergy's head offices, he added: Before the victory of the revolution, the clergymen were present on the scene for the struggle and today they are present on the scene for the same reason.

The Majles speaker referred to various outlooks on development and reconstruction of the country and said: We feel a school of thought has emerged that believes in development and reconstruction, even at the cost of trampling on the values of the Islamic Revolution. This school says economic development needs political development and that in order to achieve political development, we should solve our problems with the world and namely with America. In short, this means that we should give in to America.

He added: We believe in the country's development and progress and believe that a developed, strong, and self-sufficient Iran can stand in front of America.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Nateq-Nuri recalled: The line of the esteemed leader in foreign policy is one of no compromise with America and is based on strength, wisdom, and expedience.

He added: The esteemed leader said in answer to murmurs about compromise with America and giving in to it: Where does the limit of this compromise end?!

He said: We believe that the more we give in to America, the more America will become bold and advance so as to re-establish its diktat.

The Majles speaker said: Some people have said we should use South Korea as a pattern for the country's development. But the leader of the revolution stated within this context: What has South Korea achieved apart from being under American domination?

He added: The line following the supreme jurisconsult believes that development is the prologue to achieving social justice.

In another part of his remarks, the Majles speaker said that the performance of the fourth term of the Majles was positive and added: The esteemed leader's satisfaction with the fourth term of the Majles is the largest asset for the Majles and one of the aspects which the esteemed leader of the Islamic Revolution leans on. This is why the Majles has coupled ethics with policy.

He also stated that with the efforts and cooperation of the Majles, important steps were taken toward the country's development and reconstruction and added that the approval of the Second Five-Year Plan, repaying debts, and reducing foreign loans should be listed as the fourth term's major achievements.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Nateq-Nuri referred to the way the Tehran Militant Clergy was formed before the victory of the Islamic Revolution and said: The formation of the Tehran Militant Clergy Association and its presence on the scenes of struggle against the despotic regime was not in order to gain power, but to carry out its duty.

He then expressed his condolences to all Muslims on the anniversary of the death of the sixth imam of the Shiites, Imam Ja'far Sadeq, peace be upon him, and also referred with reverence to the anniversary of the heart-rending death of the Imam's memory, Haj Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni.

In this meeting, Ayatollah Movahhedi-Kermani, member of the Central Council of the Tehran Militant Clergy, referred to the vital duties of the Majles deputies and said: The Majles deputies should always serve the people. Those whose deputyship has ended will have only service to the people to show for it.

He added: Care in drafting legislation is an extremely important point, which the deputies should carry out by putting forth plans and approving bills aimed at solving the people's problems and serving them.

Ayatollah Movahhedi-Kermany said: If one day, God forbid, favoritism prevails in the country and only a small number of people can solve their problems through the deputies, this will be extremely dangerous because all the people would not have equal access.

He added: The deputies should decide from the very start not to be influenced, but to see that they defend anyone who is oppressed and who applies to them for help.

He said: We should be careful to please God, both in our friendships and in our animosity, and to always obey the supreme jurisconsult.

Also, Eng. Mohammad Reza Bahonar, member of the Majles board of directors, analyzed the first round of the fifth term elections and said: In the first round, more than 70 percent of the candidates who were supported by the Tehran Militant Clergy won.

He said: We should also actively participate in the second round.

Eng. Bahonar said that turnout at the elections was very good and added: The extent of the people's presence in the elections was unforeseeable by the enemies of Islam.

Then, Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Mo'ezzi, member of the Central Council of the Tehran Militant Clergy, referred to the people's presence on the political scene and the participation of all the people and political groups in the elections and said: The people's extensive presence at the polling stations was because of their commitment to their divine duties and their divine feelings.

He said: During the Majles elections, the people once again expressed their trust in the Tehran Militant Clergy, so much so that 22 of the candidates proposed by this association were among the first 30 candidates to be elected.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Mo'ezzi referred to the existence of violations in the election campaigns and said: In the elections, there was rumor-mongering against the Tehran Militant Clergy and they even published a forged list with the names of a number of Tehran clergymen, which was similar to the Tehran Militant Clergy's list.

He said: The Tehran Militant Clergy tried to avoid destroying others in its propaganda, and strived only to prove itself.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Mo'ezzi recalled: The assessment of the elections by some groups was that the more they spend on the campaign, the more they will win. But the outcome of the elections proved the opposite.

He added: Our association is a religious association and our people went to the polling stations with a feeling of canonical duty.

In this meeting, Tehran Deputy Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Seyyed Reza Taqavi, referred to the Tehran Militant Clergy as a genuine and profound process in Iranian history and said: The Shiite clergymen are inspired by Imam Sadeq, peace be upon him, and have always proven themselves to be mentors of the Islamic ummah at sensitive periods.

He added: Throughout history, clergymen have resisted despotism and colonialism, and they have undertaken leadership in struggles. The Tobacco Sanctions by the late Mirza Shirazi, the martyrdom of Shaykh Fazlollah Nuri, the broadmindedness of the late Modarres, and the leadership of the Islamic Revolution by His Eminence the Imam are examples of this resistance.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Taqavi also recalled the memory of the major martyrs of the Tehran Militant Clergy—the martyrs Beheshti, Bahonar, Motahhari, Shahabadi, and Mahallati.

Iran: First Russian-Language Magazine Published in Iran

LD2803111796 Tehran IRNA in English 1010 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 28, IRNA — The first cultural and ideological publication in Russian language, IZBRANIYE (SELECTION) has been published by the foreign service of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), it was announced Thursday [28 March].

The first issue of the publication deals with various social and religious subjects including articles on the life of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), history of Islam, life of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran Imam Khomeyni, woman's role and status in Islam as well as Zionism the birthplace of terrorism.

Pakistan

Pakistan: UNSC, OIC Urged To Check Rights Violations in Kashmir

BK2703163096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Nawabzada Nasrul!ah Khan, the chairman of the parliamentary committee on Kashmir, has appealed to the UN Security Council and the Organization of the Islamic Conference [OIC] to take immediate note of India's heinous designs to physically eliminate the leadership of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference in occupied Kashmir. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today, he said the murder of human rights activist Jalil Andrabi and attacks on other leaders have created a grave situation. He proposed that Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations should request convening an emergency session of the UN Security Council to consider this issue. He also appealed to the OIC secretary general to call an emergency meeting of the OIC contact group to discuss the gross violations of human rights by India in occupied Kashmir.

Pakistan: Foreign Minister Briefs OIC Delegates on Kashmir

BK2803071196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Delegates of the Islamic Conference Organization, OIC, attending the conference of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva have expressed deep concern over the desecration of religious places by Indian troops in occupied Kashmir and have condemned the extrajudicial killing of the renowned Kashmiri human rights champion Jalil Andrabi. At a meeting in Geneva, the OIC delegates took serious note of the human rights situation in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and reaffirmed their position on the Kashmir dispute, which was adopted at the Casablanca summit and Islamic foreign ministers conference in Conakry.

Pakistan's foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, briefed the OIC delegates on the gruesome murder of Jalil Andrabi, who was taken into custody by Indian troops a few weeks ago. Condemning this murder, he said this act has fully exposed the cruel face of the Indian authorities. Sardar Asif Ali also informed the OIC delegates of the desecration by Indian troops of the holy places of Muslims, including the Hazratbal Shrine, where Indian troops martyred Kashmiris inside the shrine mosque. The Pakistani foreign minister told the OIC countries that the election farce planned by India in occupied Kashmir was a ploy to subvert the UN Security Council resolutions. He said Pakistan wants to hold a meaningful dialogue with India to reach a final settlement of the dispute, but that India continues to evade such a dialogue by maintaining that it can be held without a specific agenda. He asked: Without an agenda, what would they talk about? Condemning the growing tendency to equate Islam with fundamentalism and terrorism, the Pakistan foreign minister said Muslims are the target of this propaganda, whereas terrorists belong to other faiths. Referring to the atrocities committed by 700,000 Indian troops on Kashmiri civilians, he said one hardly ever heard about the terrorism committed by Hindus in occupied Kashmir.

Pakistan: Spokesman Condemns 'Tragic' Murder of Kashmiri Activist

BK2703135896 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In occupied Kashmir, thousands of people staged anti-India protest in Srinagar after the body of a prominent human rights activist, Jalil Andrabi, was found in the city river today. An AFP report says the people of Srinagar took to the streets as news about the discovery of his body spread in the city. Shopkeepers closed down their shops in an immediate protest strike. The Kashmir Bar Association has been on an indefinite strike since the abduction of Jalil Andrabi. Mr. Andrabi was intercepted by Army vehicles a few hundred meters from his home on the 8th of this month and abducted. Mr. Jalil Andrabi was a regular contact and diplomat and human rights investigator in occupied Kashmir. He was scheduled to attend a United Nations human rights meeting in Geneva on the 18th of this month.

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has strongly condemned the killing of Jalil Andrabi, describing it as Indian state terrorism. The conference appealed to the UN Human Rights Commission now in session in Geneva to take urgent notice of this gruesome murder by occupation troops. A spokesman for the conference, Professor Abdul Ghani Butt, said India should be declared terrorist state for its state terrorism and killing of innocent people.

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference also condemned the rocket attack on the house of Syed Ali Gilani and said Indian authorities were bent on killing political leaders in the held valley.

Pakistan has condemned the custodial killing of Mr. Andrabi and called upon the international community to take immediate note of this tragic murder. A Foreign Office spokesman in Islamabad said the people of Pakistan have received with shock and grief the news of the murder of Mr. Jalil Andrabi. It is an extrajudicial, inhuman custodial killing of an innocent and peaceful Kashmiri. As a part of their well-orchestrated plan, Indian troops have silenced another fearless voice advocating the cases of thousands of innocent Kashmiris.

Meanwhile, Indian forces have started erecting new sandbag bunkers around Hazratbal shrine following evacuation of mujahideen from the premises. About 20 mujahideen came out of the shrine in groups of three overnight under an agreement that they would not be taken into custody. A curfew clamped on localities around the shrine remains in force. About 2,000 paramilitary troops deployed in the area have not been withdrawn by occupation authorities.

Pakistan: India Asked To Prevent Desecration of Religious Places

BK2703145396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Government of Pakistan has urged Indian authorities not to allow Indian troops and their agents to desecrate religious places in occupied Kashmir and stop impeding access to places of worship in the territory. Commenting on the outcome of the second siege of dargah [shrine] Hazratbal by Indian forces in Srinagar, a government spokesman expressed great concern over the continuing trend of Indian disregard and disrespect of holy places in occupied Kashmir. The spokesman said religious sentiments of the Kashmiri people must be fully respected by India.

Pakistan: Bhutto—Government Accepts Court Ruling on Judges

LD2803120596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 1100 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said the government has always accepted courts' judgements and decrees and has started implementing the recent short order of the Supreme Court regarding appointment of judges without prejudice to our position. Speaking in the National Assembly today, she said despite reservations the government has started implementing the order, and three ad hoc judges of the Supreme Court were confirmed this morning. Next week consultations process for the appointment of Chief Justice of the High Court will begin.

Meanwhile, it has been decided to invoke the advisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Article 186 of the Constitution as the government is conscious of the political and administrative fallout of the order. She said at no time the government had stated that it will not implement the court order. She said the short order of the Supreme Court requires time for understanding as it has far-reaching consequences. It curbs the constitutional power of the president to appoint judges.

The prime minister mentioned the names of judges who were appointed in the Supreme Court, Lahore High Court, and Baluchistan High Court who could be affected by the judgment. Also, the judges appointed in the eighties and nineties may also be affected. It may also lead to a large vacuum in the judicial structure of Pakistan.

The prime minister said the judiciary can interpret the Constitution, but the Constitution does not provide the judiciary to write or strike down an article of the

Constitution. The prime minister said the government was working for judicial harmony and does not consider this order against the executive. All appointments of the judges were made after full consultation and in writing.

She said her government does not want to see the judiciary undermined. She said, unfortunately the last few days have seen the politicization of the Supreme Court order and some people claim that a constitutional and political crisis has emerged. She emphasized in categorical terms that there was no crisis of political, constitutional, or administrative nature. The constitutional network framework contains adequate checks and balances providing a harmonious functioning of the three organs of the state — the executive, legislature, and the judiciary.

The prime minister said [word indistinct] government is committed to work in accordance with the Constitution and law to the concept of independent judiciary for which the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] waged a relentless struggle and for which it introduced the legal reforms bill before the National Assembly.

The prime minister made it clear that there is no confrontation between any organ of the state and they continue to function harmoniously in accordance with the Constitution. She said it is unfortunate that the opposition has tried to politically exploit the judiciary. It has indulged in attacks on the court and in hooliganism and also including the burning of cars in Lahore yesterday.

Responding to the speech of the prime minister, the leader of the opposition, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, criticized the reservations expressed by the prime minister about the judgment. He again asked for immediate implementation of the judgment. He said if the government feels that in future a new procedure of appointment of judges should be adopted then the opposition is ready to cooperate with the government in the National Assembly.

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